三国志 58

五丈原への道

横山光輝

希望コミックス 177

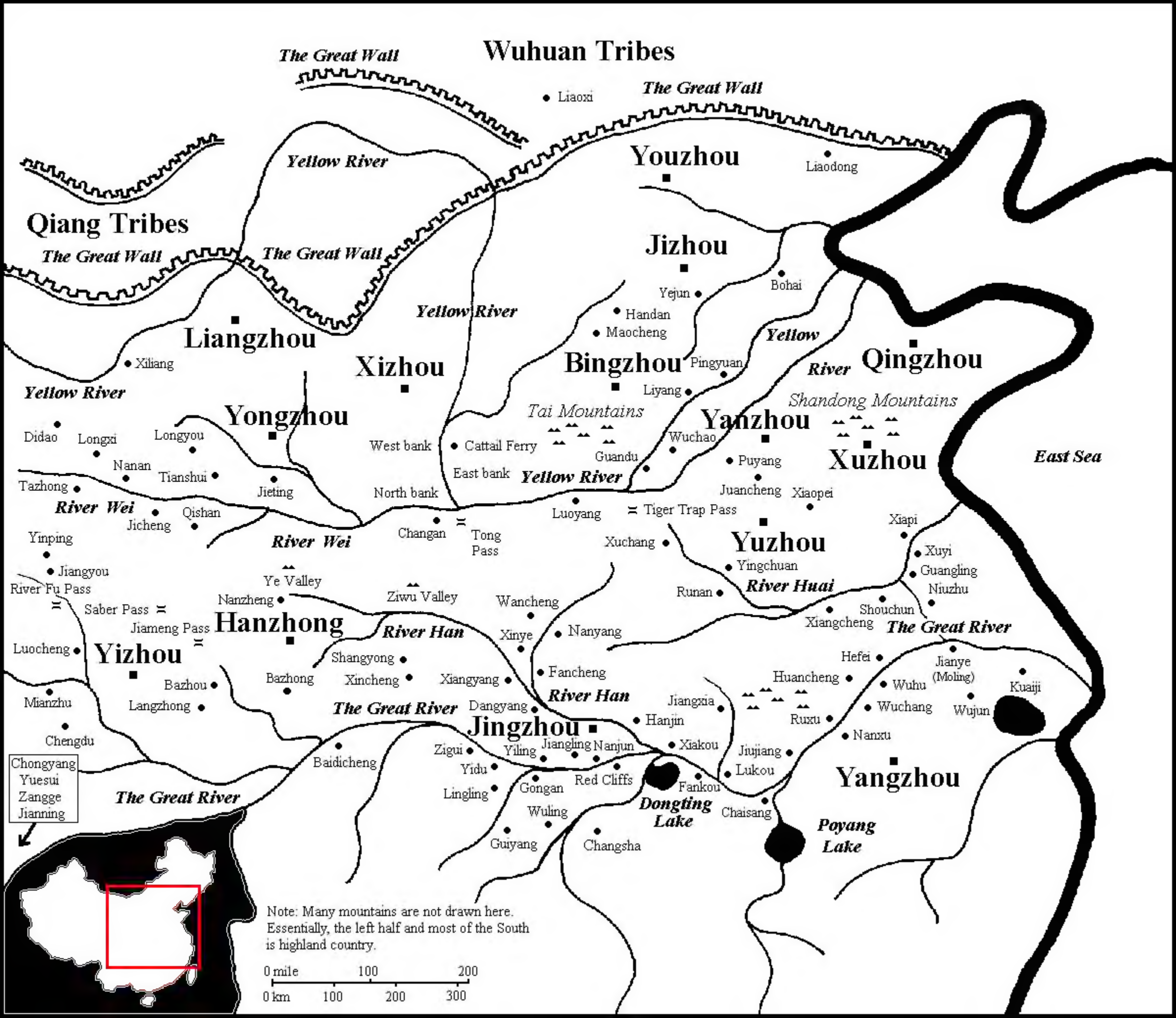
SANGOKUSHI

58

THE ROAD TO WUZHANG

YOKOYAMA MITSUTERU

SIMA YI ZHONGDA


Wuhuan Tribes
The Great Wall
The Great Wall
Liaoxi
Youzhou
Liaodong
Yellow River
Qiang Tribes
The Great Wall
The Great Wall
Jizhou
Bohai
Yejun
Handan
Maocheng
Yellow River
Liangzhou
Xizhou
Bingzhou
Pingyuan
Yellow River
Qingzhou
Xiliang
Yellow River
Liyang
Shandong Mountains
Tai Mountains
Yongzhou
Yanzhou
Didao
Longxi
Longyou
West bank
Cattail Ferry
Wuchao
Guandu
Xuzhou
East Sea
Nanan
East bank
Yellow River
Puyang
Tianshui
Tazhong
Jieting
North bank
Juancheng
Xiaopei
River Wei
Qishan
Luoyang
Tiger Trap Pass
Jicheng
Changan
Tong Pass
Xiapi
Yuzhou
Yinping
River Wei
Xuchang
Xuyi
Jiangyou
Ye Valley
Yingchuan
Guangling
River Fu Pass
Ziwu Valley
Runan
River Huai
Niuzhu
Saber Pass
Nanzheng
Wancheng
Shouchun
Jiameng Pass
Hanzhong
River Han
Xinye
Nanyang
Xiangcheng
The Great River
Luocheng
Yizhou
Shangyong
Hefei
Jianye (Moling)
Fancheng
Huancheng
Bazhou
Bazhong
Xincheng
Xiangyang
Wuhu
Kuaiji
River Han
Jiangxia
Mianzhu
Langzhong
The Great River
Dangyang
Wuchang
Wujun
Ruxu
Hanjin
Jingzhou
Chengdu
Nanxu
Zigui
Yiling
Jiangling
Nanjun
Xiakou
Jiujiang
Baidicheng
Yidu
Lukou
Yangzhou
Chongyang
Yuesui
Zangge
Jianning
Red Cliffs
Fankou
Gongan
Lingling
Dongting Lake
Chaisang
Wuling
Poyang Lake
Guiyang
Changsha
The Great River
Note: Many mountains are not drawn here.
Essentially, the left half and most of the South
is highland country.
0 mile 100 200
0 km 100 200 300

MAJOR CHARACTERS OF SANGOKUSHI

CAI MAO:
FORMER GENERAL OF LIU BIAO, WHO BECAME THE SUPREME ADMIRAL OF WEI'S NAVY WHEN JINGZHOU SURRENDERED TO CAO CAO. IN VOLUME 25, HE IS FRAMED BY ZHOU YU'S PLOT AND THUS EXECUTED BY CAO CAO.

CAO CAO MENGDE:
THE AMBITIOUS AND MACHIAVELLIAN HERO OF SANGOKUSHI. RISES TO BECOME KING OF WEI BUT DECLINES TO BECOME EMPEROR HIMSELF. PASSES AWAY FROM ILLNESS IN VOLUME 42.

CAO HONG:
YOUNGER COUSIN OF CAO CAO AND NOW HIS LOYAL GENERAL.

CAO PI:
CAO CAO'S ELDEST SON WHO SUCCEEDS TO KING OF WEI AND DETHRONES LAST HAN EMPEROR TO BECOME THE FIRST WEI EMPEROR. HE PASSES AWAY DUE TO ILLNESS IN VOLUME 49.

CAO RUI:
ELDEST SON OF CAO PI. SUCCEEDS AFTER HIS FATHER TO BECOME THE SECOND WEI EMPEROR.

CAO REN:
COUSIN OF CAO CAO AND NOW HIS LOYAL GENERAL. PORTRAYED AS BRAVE BUT HOT-TEMPERED IN THE STORY.

CHENG GONG:
A CITY GUARD CAPTAIN WHO ARRESTED CAO CAO, ONLY TO FREE AND ESCAPE WITH HIM AFTER SYMPATHIZING WITH HIS STORY. HOWEVER, HE LATER DEFECTS TO LU BU AND SERVES AS HIS ADVISOR. IN VOLUME 14, HE IS EXECUTED ALONG WITH LU BU.

CHENG YU:
IMPORTANT AND LOYAL STRATEGIST SERVING CAO CAO.

CHEN DENG:
THE SON OF CHEN GUI AND FORMERLY TAO QIAN OF XUZHOU'S SUBORDINATE. HE AND HIS FATHER SUCCESSFULLY PLOTTED LU BU'S DOWNFALL.

CHEN GUI:
FATHER OF CHEN DENG WHO SUCCESSFULLY PLOTTED LU BU'S DOWNFALL. DESPITE SECRETLY WORKING TOGETHER WITH LIU BEI AGAINST CAO CAO, CAO CAO SPARES HIS LIFE AND ALLOWS HIM TO CONTINUE LIVING IN XUZHOU.

DIAN WEI:
CAO CAO'S PERSONAL BODYGUARD, RENOWNED FOR HIS STRENGTH. HE IS ALSO KNOWN BY THE NICKNAME, "E LAI," IN REFERENCE TO THE GENERAL OF THE SAME NAME WHO SERVED UNDER KING ZHOU OF SHANG. IN VOLUME 12, HE WAS KILLED DURING ZHANG XIU'S PLOT TO KILL CAO CAO.

DIAO CHAN:
A MAID TO WANG YUN, WHO RAISED HER AS HIS OWN DAUGHTER. SHE AND WANG YUN PLOTTED TO DISTANCE LU BU FROM DONG ZHUO BY HAVING HER SEDUCE BOTH MEN. IN VOLUME 8, SHE COMMITTED SUICIDE AFTER ACCOMPLISHING HER GOAL.

DONG CHENG:
ELDER STATESMAN OF HAN WHO IS EMPEROR XIAN'S CONFIDANT. EMPEROR XIAN SECRETELY ASKS HIM TO ELIMINATE CAO CAO, WHO NOW RULES THE IMPERIAL COURT AS CHANCELLOR. IN VOLUME 17, HE IS EXECUTED AFTER HIS ASSASSINATION PLOT IS FOUND OUT BY CAO CAO.

DONG ZHUO:
GOVERNOR OF LIANGZHOU WHO LATER SEIZED CONTROL OF LUOYANG AND SEATED HIMSELF AS THE CHANCELLOR OF HAN, BECOMING AN INFAMOUS TYRANT. IN VOLUME 8, HE IS BETRAYED AND KILLED BY HIS RIGHT-HAND MAN, LU BU.

EMPRESS HE:
ORIGINALY A PEASANT, HER BEAUTY WAS NOTICED BY THE TEN ATTENDANTS AND SHE ROSE TO BECOME THE EMPRESS, UTILIZING RUTHLESS MEANS. HOWEVER, SHE AND HER SON WERE REMOVED FROM POWER AND KILLED BY DONG ZHUO WHEN HE CAME TO POWER.

FA ZHENG:
FORMER SUBJECT OF LIU ZHANG, BUT DEFECTED TO LIU BEI DURING HIS CONQUEST OF SHU. HE IS ONE OF LIU BEI'S KEY STRATEGISTS.

GAN NING:
FORMER-PIRATE WHO IS NOW A FIRECE GENERAL OF WU.

GONGSUN ZAN:
GOVERNOR OF BEIPING, WHO WAGES WAR AGAINST YUAN SHAO FOR KILLING HIS YOUNG BROTHER. IN VOLUME 15, YUAN SHAO'S ARMY CONQUERS BEIPING, CAUSING GONGSUN ZAN TO COMMIT SUICIDE.

GUAN PING:
GUAN YU'S ADOPTED SON AS OF VOLUME 19. SERVES ALONGSIDE HIS FATHER UNTIL THEIR DEATH IN VOLUME 42.

GUAN XING:
GUAN YU'S SECOND SON, WHO BECOMES A PROMINENT SHU OFFICER AFTER HIS FATHER'S DEATH.

GUAN YU YUNCHANG:
SWORN YOUNGER BROTHER TO LIU BEI AND SWORN OLDER BROTHER TO ZHANG FEI. AFTER THE FAILED SIEGE ON FANCHENG, HE IS EVENTUALLY CAUGHT BY WU FORCES AND PROMPTLY EXECUTED IN VOLUME 42.

GUO JIA:
THE TALENTED STRATEGIST AND ADVISOR TO CAO CAO. HE DIES FROM ILLNESS DURING CAO CAO'S CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE YUAN FAMILY (UNSHOWN IN MANGA).

HE JIN:
ORIGINALLY A SIMPLE BUTCHER, HE BECAME A GENERAL WHEN HIS YOUNGER SISTER ROSE TO BECOME EMPRESS HE. HE IS KILLED BY THE TEN ATTENDANTS DURING THEIR POWER STRUGGLE IN VOLUME 3.

HUANG GAI:
LOYAL GENERAL OF WU, WHOSE FAMILY HAS SERVED THE SUN FAMILY FOR THREE GENERATIONS.

HUANG ZHONG:
AN ELDERLY WARRIOR GENERAL RENOWNED ESPECIALLY FOR HIS SKILL WITH THE BOW. FORMERLY SERVED LIU BIAO AND HAN XUAN BUT DEFECTS TO LIU BEI IN VOLUME 28. FALLS IN BATTLE AGAINST WU FORCES IN VOLUME 43.

HUA XIN:
WEI MINISTER WHO RISES TO BECOME CHANCELLOR OF WEI UNDER CAO PI'S REIGN.

JIANG QIN:
GENERAL OF WU. FORMERLY A BANDIT ALONG WITH ZHOU TAI, BUT BECAME SUN CE'S SUBORDINATE OUT OF ADMIRATION FOR SUN CE'S FATHER, SUN JIAN.

JIANG WEI:
NATIVE OF JICHENG AND FAMED FOR BOTH HIS MENTAL AND MARTIAL PROWESS. ORIGINALLY SERVED WEI, BUT DEFECTED TO SHU IN VOLUME 51 AFTER KONGMING'S PLAN TURNED HIS WEI ALLIES AGAINST HIM.

JIA XU:
FORMER STRATEGIST OF ZHANG XIU, WHO PLOTTED A FAILED ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT ON CAO CAO, WHICH LEFT DIAN WEI DEAD. AS OF VOLUME 16, HE HAS DEFECTED TO CAO CAO AND SERVES AS HIS ADVISOR.

LI DIAN:
SCHOLARLY GENERAL UNDER THE SERVICE OF CAO CAO.

LI RU:
CUNNING ADVISOR TO DONG ZHUO. WITH HIS ADVICE, DONG ZHUO FIRMLY SECURES HIS SEAT AS THE CHANCELLOR OF HAN. IN VOLUME 8, HE IS KILLED ALONG WITH DONG ZHUO WHEN LU BU BETRAYS THEM.

LIU BIAO:
THE GOVERNOR OF JINGZHOU. HE PASSES AWAY DUE TO SICKNESS IN VOLUME 22 AND THE CONSEQUENT SUCCESSION CRISIS ALLOWS CAO CAO TO TAKE OVER JINGZHOU.

LIU BEI XUANDE:
THE CENTRAL CHARACTER OF SANGOKUSHI. A VIRTUOUS MAN, WHO CLAIMS DESCENT FROM EMPEROR JING OF HAN. HE HAS SWORN AN OATH OF BROTHERHOOD WITH GUAN YU AND ZHANG FEI. HE BECOMES AN EMPEROR AND ESTABLISHES A SUCCESOR-DYNASTY TO HAN IN VOLUME 43.

LIU FENG:
LIU BEI'S ADOPTED SON. ORIGINALLY THE NEPHEW OF LIU MI, HE WAS ADOPTED UPON FIRST SIGHT BY LIU BEI WHO TOOK A LIKING TO HIM IN VOLUME 21. HE IS UNFORTUNATELY EXECUTED BY LIU BEI IN VOLUME 43 AFTER DENYING AID TO GUAN YU.

LIU QI:
ELDEST SON OF LIU BIAO WHO TEMPORARILY LOSES HIS INHERITANCE OF JINGZHOU DUE TO CAI MAO'S PLOT. IN VOLUME 29, HE PASSES AWAY FROM ILLNESS AND THE RIGHTFUL OWNERSHIP OF JINGZHOU CONTINUES TO BE DEBATED BETWEEN SUN QUAN AND LIU BEI.

LIU ZHANG:
INCOMPETENT RULER OF SHU (ALTERNATIVE NAME FOR YIZHOU). HE SEEKS LIU BEI'S HELP TO FEND OFF ZHANG LU, BUT RELATIONS SOON SOUR AND LIU BEI USURPS HIS RULE OVER SHU. AS OF VOLUME 35, HE IS EXILED TO JINGZHOU.

LU BU:
ALTHOUGH REPUTED TO BE THE STRONGEST WARRIOR, HE IS HOT-HEADED AND RARELY HEEDS WISE ADVICE. IN VOLUME 14, HE WAS BETRAYED BY HIS SUBORDINATES, AND EXECUTED BY CAO CAO.

LU MENG:
FIRECE WU GENERAL, WHO AT LAST CONQUERS JINGZHOU FOR SUN QUAN, CAPTURING GUAN YU IN DOING SO. UNFORTUNATELY DIES TO A SUDDEN ILLNESS AFTER GUAN YU'S EXECUTION IN VOLUME 42, CAUSING SOME TO THINK HE WAS CURSED.

LU SU:
IMPORTANT MILITARY GENERAL AND ADVISOR OF WU.

LU XUN:
TALENTED WU OFFICIAL WHO QUICKLY RISES TO FAVOUR AFTER SUCCESSFULLY PLANNING THE CONQUEST OF JINGZHOU.

MA CHAO:
ONE OF THE FIVE TIGER GENERALS OF SHU, WHO ONCE SOUGHT TO AVENGE HIS FATHER'S DEATH AT CAO CAO'S HANDS BEFORE ENTERING LIU BEI'S SERVICE IN VOLUME 35. HE PASSES AWAY DUE TO ILLNESS IN VOLUME 49.

MA DAI:
A NEPHEW OF MA CHAO WHO ENTERS LIU BEI'S SERVICE ALONGSIDE HIS UNCLE.

MA LIANG:
AN ADVISOR TO LIU BEI. HE IS THE FOURTH YOUNGEST OF THE FIVE MA BROTHERS, AND IS NOTED FOR HIS INTELLECT AND WHITE EYEBROWS. HE PASSES AWAY DUE TO ILLNESS IN VOLUME 46.

MA SU:
YOUNGER BROTHER OF MA LIANG, WHO, UPON REPORTING THE PASSING OF MA LIANG, CAUGHT THE ATTENTION OF KONGMING AND ASSISTED THE SOUTHERN CAMPAIGNS. HE HAS SINCE BECOME AN IMPORTANT STRATEGIST OF SHU.

MA TENG:
GOVERNOR OF XILIANG AND FATHER OF MA CHAO, WHO SIGNED THE BLOOD-PLEDGE TO ELIMINATE CAO CAO. IN VOLUME 30, HE IS EXECUTED FOR A FAILED ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT OF CAO CAO.

MENG DA:
FORMER SUBJECT OF LIU ZHANG WHO DEFECTS TO LIU BEI, ALONG WITH HIS GOOD FRIENDS ZHANG SONG AND FA ZHENG. HE LATER DEFECTS TO WEI IN VOLUME 43, AFTER REALIZING HE WOULD BE KILLED IN SHU TO BEAR RESPONSIBILITY FOR GUAN YU'S DEATH.

MENG HUO:
KING OF THE NANMAN TRIBES, WHO UNSUCCESSFULLY SUPPORTED A REVOLT IN SOUTHERN SHU. KONGMING'S SOUTHERN CAMPAIGNS WERE LAUNCHED IN RETALIATION. AFTER BEING CAPTURED AND RELEASED 7 TIMES, HE SURRENDERS AND BECOMES A LOYAL SUBJECT TO SHU.

MI ZHU:
ONE OF LIU BEI'S ADVISORS.

PANG DE:
FIERCE GENERAL WHO FORMERLY SERVED MA TENG AND THEN MA CHAO. IN VOLUME 36, HE DEFECTS TO CAO CAO'S SERVICE DUE TO A TROUBLED RELATIONSHIP WITH ZHANG LU, THE LORD OF HANZHONG. PERISHES IN THE BATTLE OF FANCHENG AGAINST GUAN YU IN VOLUME 41.

PANG TONG SHIYUAN:
NICKNAMED THE YOUNG PHOENIX (FENGCHU), HE IS A MASTERFUL STRATEGIST SAID TO BE ZHUGE LIANG'S EQUAL. AFTER ENTERING LIU BEI'S SERVICE, HE TRAGICALLY MET AN EARLY DEATH IN SHU WHEN AMBUSHED BY ZHANG REN IN VOLUME 34.

SIMA YI ZHONGDA:
IMPORTANT MILITARY STRATEGIST OF WEI SINCE CAO CAO'S REIGN. UPON CAO RUI'S SUCCESSION TO THE WEI THRONE, HE WAS BRIEFLY FRAMED FOR TREASON BY ZHUGE LIANG, BUT WAS RESTORED TO POWER IN LIGHT OF THE GROWING CRISIS OF ZHUGE LIANG'S NORTHERN CAMPAIGN AGAINST WEI.

SHUI JING:
HIS REAL NAME IS SIMA HUI BUT HE IS MORE COMMONLY KNOWN BY HIS TAOIST NAME, SHUI JING (MEANING WATER MIRROR). HE IS THE TEACHER OF ZHUGE LIANG, PANG TONG, AND XU SHU.

SUN CE:
ELDEST SON OF SUN JIAN, WHO TURNS THE SUN FAMILY'S FORTUNE AROUND WITH HIS CONQUEST OF THE SOUTH-LANDS. IN VOLUME 19, A FAILED ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT AND CONFLICT WITH YU JI CAUSES HIS BODY AND MENTAL HEALTH TO WEAKEN. HE SUCCUMBS TO DEATH SHORTLY AFTER.

SUN JIAN:
THE GOVERNOR OF CHANGSHA WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE ALLIANCE TO BRING DOWN DONG ZHUO. HOWEVER, HIS ALLIES LIU BIAO AND YUAN SHAO TO TURN ON HIM WHEN HE TRIES TO KEEP THE IMPERIAL SEAL FOR HIMSELF. IN VOLUME 7, HE IS KILLED IN BATTLE AGAINST YUAN SHAO.

SUN QIAN:
TRUSTED ADVISOR TO LIU BEI. (HIS ROLE IS MUCH SMALLER IN SANGOKUSHI COMPARED TO THE ORIGINAL NOVEL.)

SUN QUAN:
YOUNGER BROTHER OF SUN CE AND THE CURRENT RULER OF WU, THE SOUTHLANDS OF CHINA.

TAISHI CI:
GENERAL WHO FORMERLY SERVED LIU YAO BUT DEFECTED TO SUN CE IN VOLUME 11. DURING THE BATTLE OF HEFEI (VOL. 29), HE FALLS PREY TO ZHANG LIAO'S PLAN AND IS KILLED IN BATTLE.

TAO QIAN:
THE KIND GOVERNOR OF XUZHOU WHO ACCIDENTALLY INVOKES CAO CAO'S WRATH WHEN HIS DISLOYAL SUBORDINATE ZHANG KAI KILLS CAO CAO'S FATHER, CAO SONG. UPON HIS DEATH, HE BEQUEATHS XUZHOU TO LIU BEI.

THE TEN ATTENDANTS:
A CORRUPT GROUP OF 10 EUNUCHS WHO WERE THE HIGHEST RANKING MINISTERS OF THE IMPERIAL COURT. THEY WERE KILLED DURING THE POWER STRUGGLE WITH HE JIN IN VOLUME 4.

WANG YUN:
THE MINISTER OF THE MASSES, ONE OF THE 3 HIGHEST RANKING POSTS IN THE IMPERIAL COURT. HE SUCCESSFULLY PLOTS DONG ZHUO'S DOWNFALL USING DIAO CHAN IN VOLUME 8. HOWEVER, HE IS LATER KILLED BY REMNANTS OF DONG ZHUO'S ARMY (UNSHOWN IN MANGA).

WEI YAN:
GENERAL WHO FORMERLY SERVED LIU BIAO AND HAN XUAN BUT HAS DEFECTED TO LIU BEI ALONG WITH HUANG ZHONG IN VOLUME 28.

WEN CHOU:
HE AND YANG LIANG ARE YUAN SHAO'S TWO STRONGEST GENERALS. IN VOLUME 18, HE IS AMBUSHED BY CAO CAO'S ARMY AND KILLED BY GUAN YU.

XIAHOU DUN:
TRUSTED GENERAL OF CAO CAO. HE LOST HIS LEFT EYE DURING A BATTLE AGAINST LU BU'S ARMY IN VOLUME 13.

XU CHU:
TRUSTED BODYGUARD OF CAO CAO. ORIGINALY A PEASANT, HE WAS RECRUITED BY CAO CAO WHO WAS IMPRESSED AFTER SEEING XU CHU'S DUEL WITH DIAN WEI.

XU SHU (SHAN FU):
THE TALENTED STRATEGIST WHO STUDIED UNDER SHUI JING. AFTER A BRIEF STINT OF SERVICE TO LIU BEI, HE IS TRICKED INTO COMING TO XUCHANG AND SERVING CAO CAO (VOLUME 21).

XUN YU:
TALENTED ADVISOR TO CA CAO.

XU HUANG:
CALM AND COLLECTED GENERAL UNDER SERVICE TO CAO CAO. CONSIDERED TO BE ONE OF THE FIVE TOP GENERALS OF WEI BY CHEN SHOU, AUTHOR OF RECORDS OF THE THREE KINGDOMS.

YAN LIANG:
HE AND WEN CHOU ARE YUAN SHAO'S TWO STRONGEST GENERALS. IN VOLUME 17, HE WAS KILLED BY GUAN YU WHILE FIGHTING CAO CAO'S ARMY AT BAIMA.

YAN YAN:
FORMER GENERAL OF LIU ZHANG BUT DEFECTED TO LIU BEI AFTER HIS CAPTURE AT ZHANG FEI'S HANDS IN VOLUME 34. HE IS NOTED FOR HIS ENERGY DESPITE HIS OLD AGE.

YU JIN:
GENERAL SERVING CAO CAO. CONSIDERED TO BE ONE OF THE FIVE TOP GENERALS OF WEI BY CHEN SHOU, AUTHOR OF RECORDS OF THE THREE KINGDOMS.

YUAN SHAO:
OLDER BROTHER OF YUAN SHU AND THE GOVERNOR OF JIZHOU. AFTER MANY YEARS OF WARRING AGAINST CAO CAO FOR CONTROL OF NORTHERN CHINA, HE AND HIS FAMILY ARE DEFEATED.

YUAN SHU:
YOUNGER BROTHER OF YUAN SHAO AND THE GOVERNOR OF NANYANG. AFTER RECEIVING THE IMPERIAL SEAL FROM SUN CE, HE DECLARES HIMSELF AS THE EMPEROR OF ZHONG DYNASTY. IN VOLUME 15, HE DIES OF THIRST AFTER BEING ON THE RUN FROM LIU BEI AND CAO CAO'S ARMIES.

ZHANG BAO:
ELDEST SON OF ZHANG FEI, WHO RISES TO PROMINENCE AFTER THE DEATH OF HIS FATHER.

ZHANG FEI YIDE:
A FIRECE, SHORT-TEMPERED WARRIOR WHO IS THE SWORN YOUNGER BROTHER OF LIU BEI AND GUAN YU. HIS TEMPER EVENTUALLY GETS THE BETTER OF HIM, WHEN HE IS BETRAYED AND KILLED BY HIS SUBORDINATES IN VOLUME 43.

ZHANG LIAO:
ONE OF CAO CAO'S TOP GENERALS. HE WAS FORMERLY LU BU'S SUBORDINATE BUT DEFECTED TO CAO CAO AFTER THE FORMER'S EXECUTION.

ZHANG LU:
THE LEADER OF THE CELESTIAL MASTERS TAOIST MOVEMENT, AND THE RULER OF HANZHONG. IN VOLUME 36, CAO CAO CONQUERS HANZHONG BUT SPARES ZHANG LU.

ZHANG REN:
ONE OF SHU'S MOST CAPABLE GENERALS WHO PLANNED THE AMBUSH THAT KILLED PANG TONG. HE REFUSED TO SERVE LIU BEI UNLIKE MANY OF HIS COMRADES AND WAS THUS EXECUTED WHEN FINALLY CAPTURED AT THE HANDS OF ZHUGE LIANG (VOLUME 35).

ZHANG SONG:
AN ADVISOR TO LIU ZHANG WHO, UPON FAILING TO MAKE AN ALLIANCE BETWEEN CAO CAO AND LIU ZHANG, SOUGHT LIU BEI'S SUPPORT AND SWITCHED HIS ALLEGIANCE. IN VOLUME 34, HE IS EXECUTED WHEN HIS BROTHER REPORTS HIS BETRAYAL TO LIU ZHANG.

ZHANG XIU:
LORD OF WANCHENG WHO ATTEMPTED TO KILL CAO CAO DURING THE BATTLE OF WANCHENG IN VOLUME 12. AFTER YEARS OF CONFLICT AGAINST CAO CAO, HE FINALLY DECIDES TO DEFECT TO CAO CAO IN VOLUME 16.

ZHAO YUN ZILONG:
A FORMER SUBJECT OF YUAN SHAO BUT LATER DEFECTED TO SERVE GONGSUN ZAN. AFTER GONGSUN ZAN'S DEATH, HE BECOMES ONE OF LIU BEI'S MOST TRUSTED GENERALS.

ZHOU TAI:
GENERAL OF WU. FORMERLY A BANDIT ALONG WITH JIANG QIN BUT BECAME SUN CE'S SUBORDINATE OUT OF ADMIRATION FOR HIS FATHER, SUN JIAN.

ZHANG ZHAO:
ELDER STATESMAN AND SUN QUAN'S TRUSTED ADVISOR. HE ORIGINALLY ENTERED SUN CE'S SERVICE ALONG WITH ZHANG HONG, WITH WHOM HE WAS REFERRED TO AS THE "TWO ZHANGS."

ZHOU CANG:
FORMERLY A YELLOW TURBAN, HE MEETS GUAN YU IN VOLUME 18 AND BECOMES HIS SUBORDINATE. COMMITS SUICIDE AFTER LEARNING GUAN YU WAS EXECUTED IN VOLUME 42.

ZHOU YU GONGJIN:
SWORN BROTHER OF SUN CE, AND ONE OF WU'S TOP MINDS, SERVING AS THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF DURING THE BATTLE OF THE RED CLIFFS. HE RECEIVES A CRITICAL ARROW-WOUND DURING HIS NANJUN CAMPAIGN (VOL. 27) WHICH HE NEVER FULLY RECOVERS FROM, LEADING TO HIS TRAGIC EARLY DEATH IN VOLUME 30.

ZHUGE LIANG KONGMING:
MASTERFUL STRATEGIST AND FORMER STUDENT OF SHUI JING. IN VOLUME 21, HE YIELDS TO LIU BEI'S PERSISTENCE AND DECIDES TO BECOME HIS SUBJECT.

SANGOKUSHI (ROMANCE OF THE THREE KINGDOMS)

三国志

VOLUME 58
THE ROAD TO WUZHANG

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FIRE AND WATER

（『月刊ヤングキングアワーズ』掲載）

WOODEN OXEN

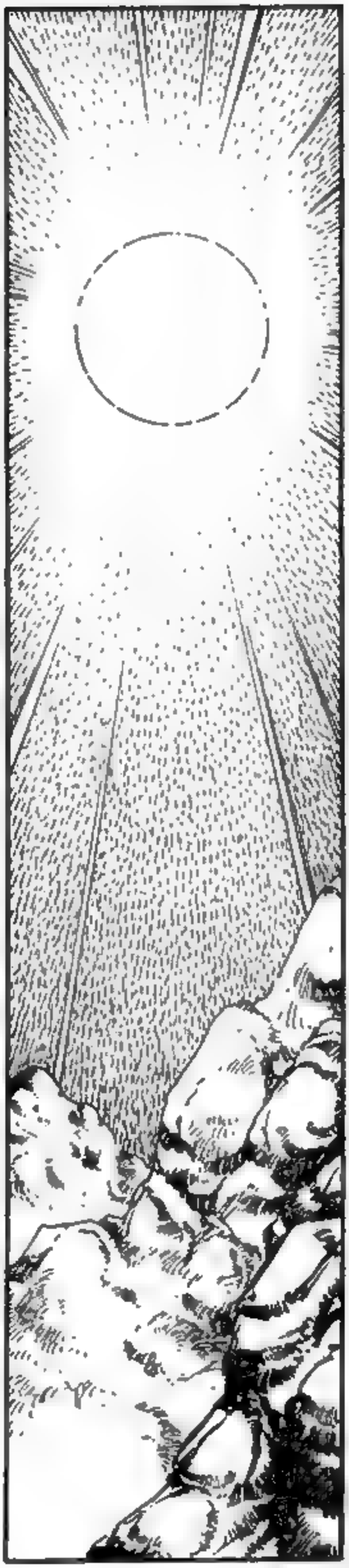
IS THAT SO?

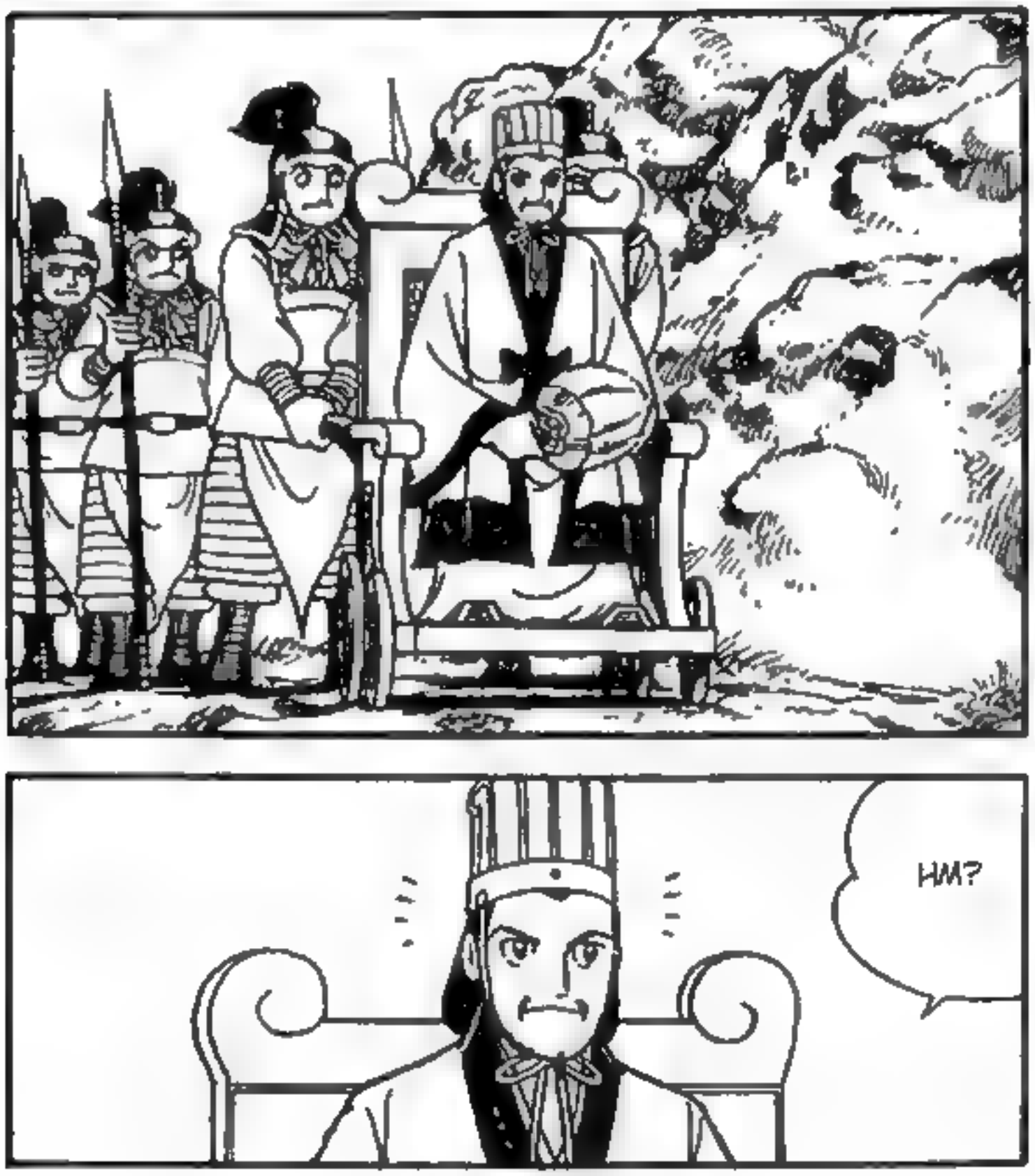
THE ENEMIES REFUSE TO RESPOND TO OUR ATTEMPTS TO LURE THEM OUT, SIR.

I'LL HAVE TO SCOUR THE LOCAL AREA TOMORROW AND SEE IF THERE'S SOME-THING I CAN USE...

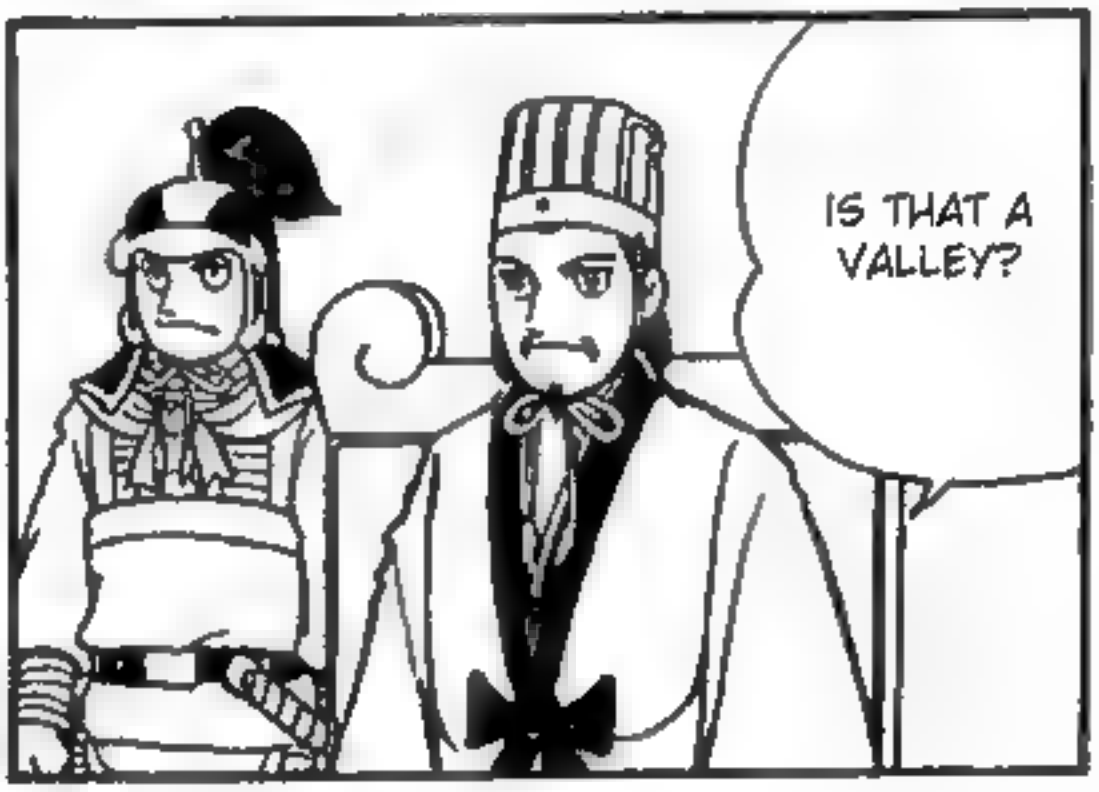
SIMA YI IS ONCE AGAIN HOPING FOR US TO BE DEFEATED BY OUR LACK OF FOOD.

カルラガラ




HM?

YES, THAT PASS LEADS TO SHANG-FANG VALLEY. IT IS ALSO KNOWN BY ITS NICKNAME, GOURD VALLEY.


IS THAT A VALLEY?

LET'S TAKE A CLOSER LOOK INSIDE.

OHH!

YES, THE REST OF THE VALLEY IS COMPLETELY SURROUNDED BY STEEP HILLS.

IS THIS THE ONLY ENTRANCE?

YES, AND THERE'S ALSO ANOTHER OPEN AREA OUTSIDE THAT CAN HOLD FOUR OR FIVE HUNDRED MEN.

THIS VALLEY SHOULD ACCOMODATE A CAMP OF 1000 MEN...

YES, SIR.

LEAD ME THERE.

THIS IS IT, SIR.

NO, I'LL MAKE A SECRET WORKSHOP HERE.

ARE YOU PLANNING TO HIDE TROOPS HERE?

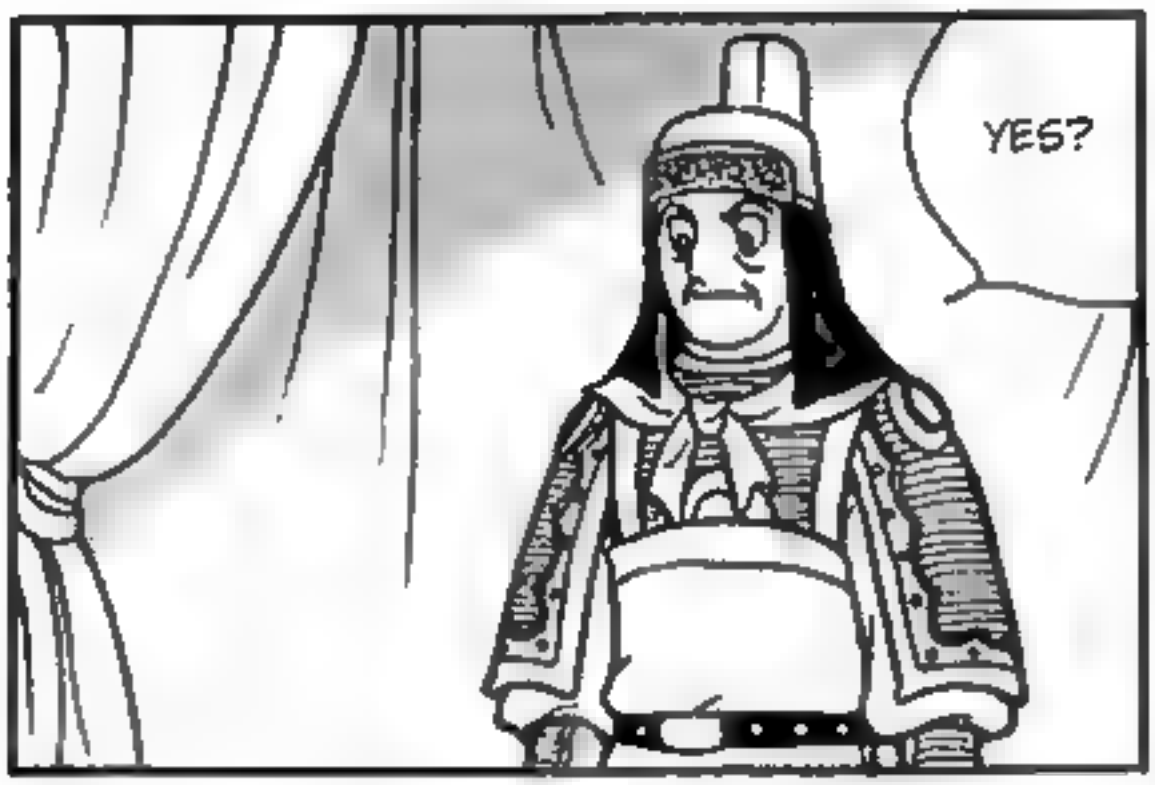
WHAT A SPLENDID PLACE! IT'S A NATURAL FORTRESS.

YES... THIS IS A GOOD FIND.

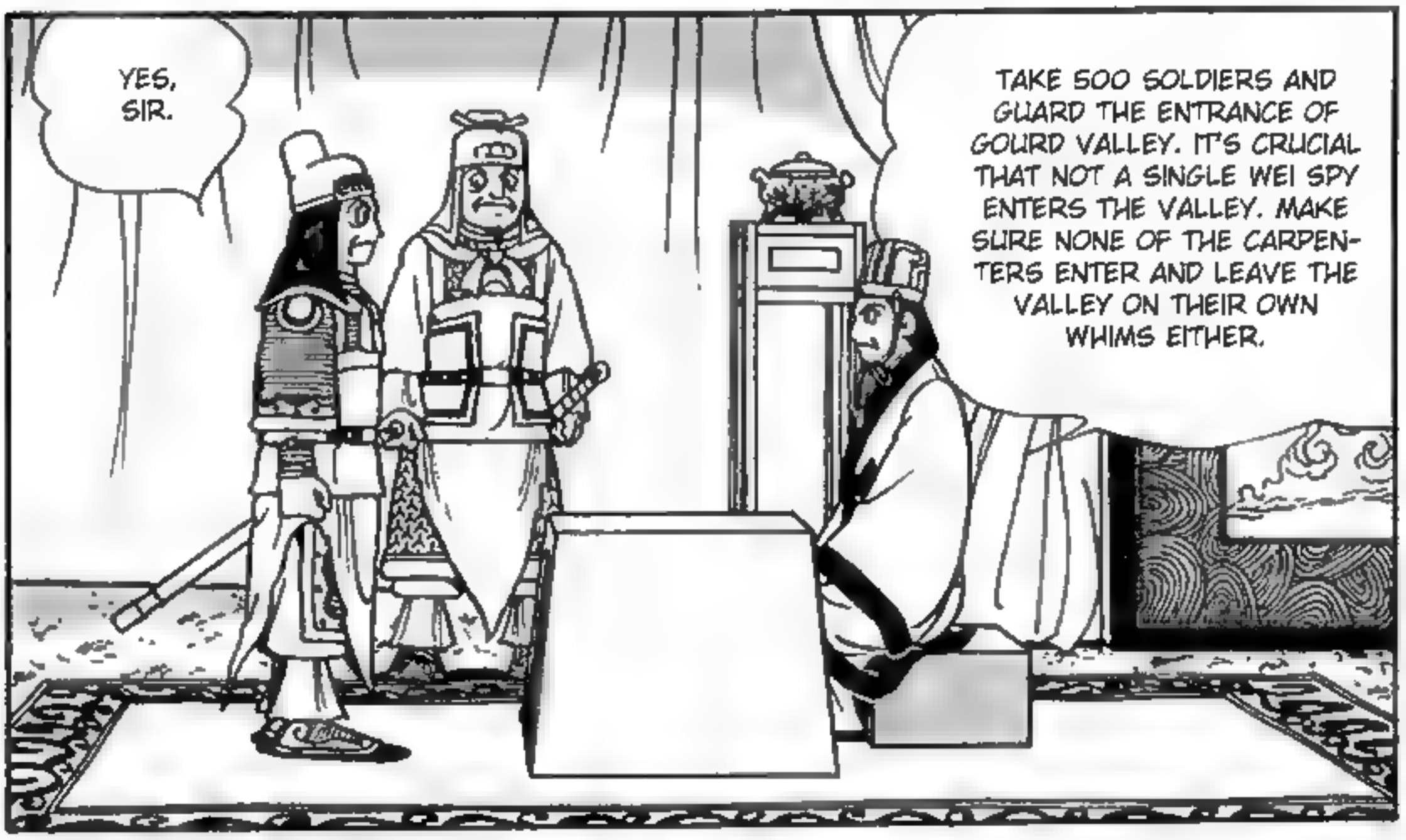
DU RUI AND HU ZHONG. I WANT YOU TO TAKE 1000 CARPENTERS TO GOURD VALLEY AND HAVE THEM MAKE THIS.

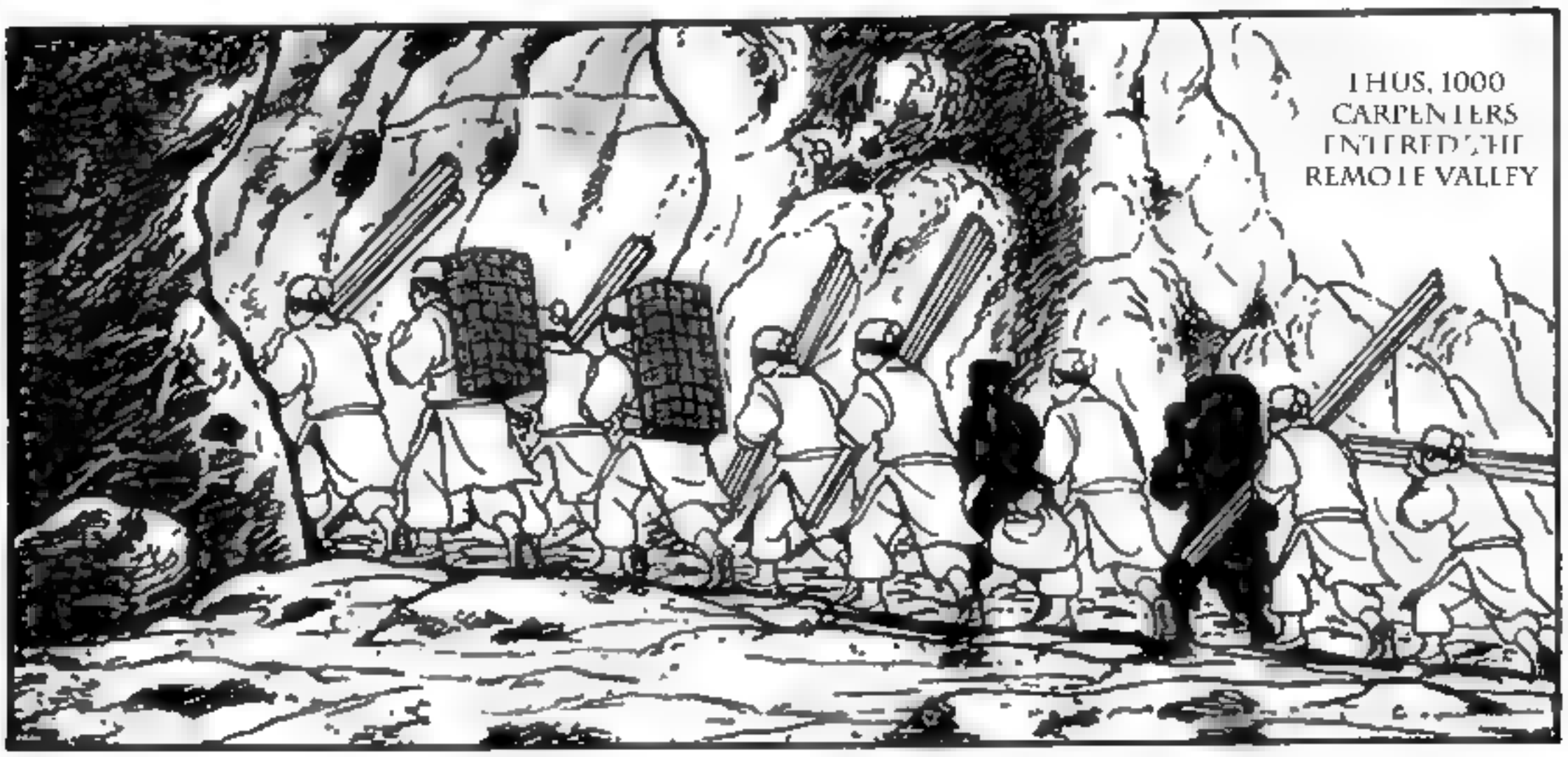
YES, SIR.

MAKE SURE NO ONE ENTERS OR LEAVES UNTIL FINISHED.


YES?

MA DAI.


YES, SIR.
TAKE 500 SOLDIERS AND GUARD THE ENTRANCE OF GOURD VALLEY. IT'S CRUCIAL THAT NOT A SINGLE WEI SPY ENTERS THE VALLEY. MAKE SURE NONE OF THE CARPENTERS ENTER AND LEAVE THE VALLEY ON THEIR OWN WHIMS EITHER.


THUS, 1000 CARPENTERS ENTERED THE REMOTE VALLEY

AND BEGAN WORK ON KONGMING'S SECRET PROJECT, AS DRAWN ON HIS BLUEPRINTS
MA DAI'S TROOPS KEPT WATCH AT ALL HOURS TO ENSURE THE COMPLETE SECRECY OF THE PROJECT

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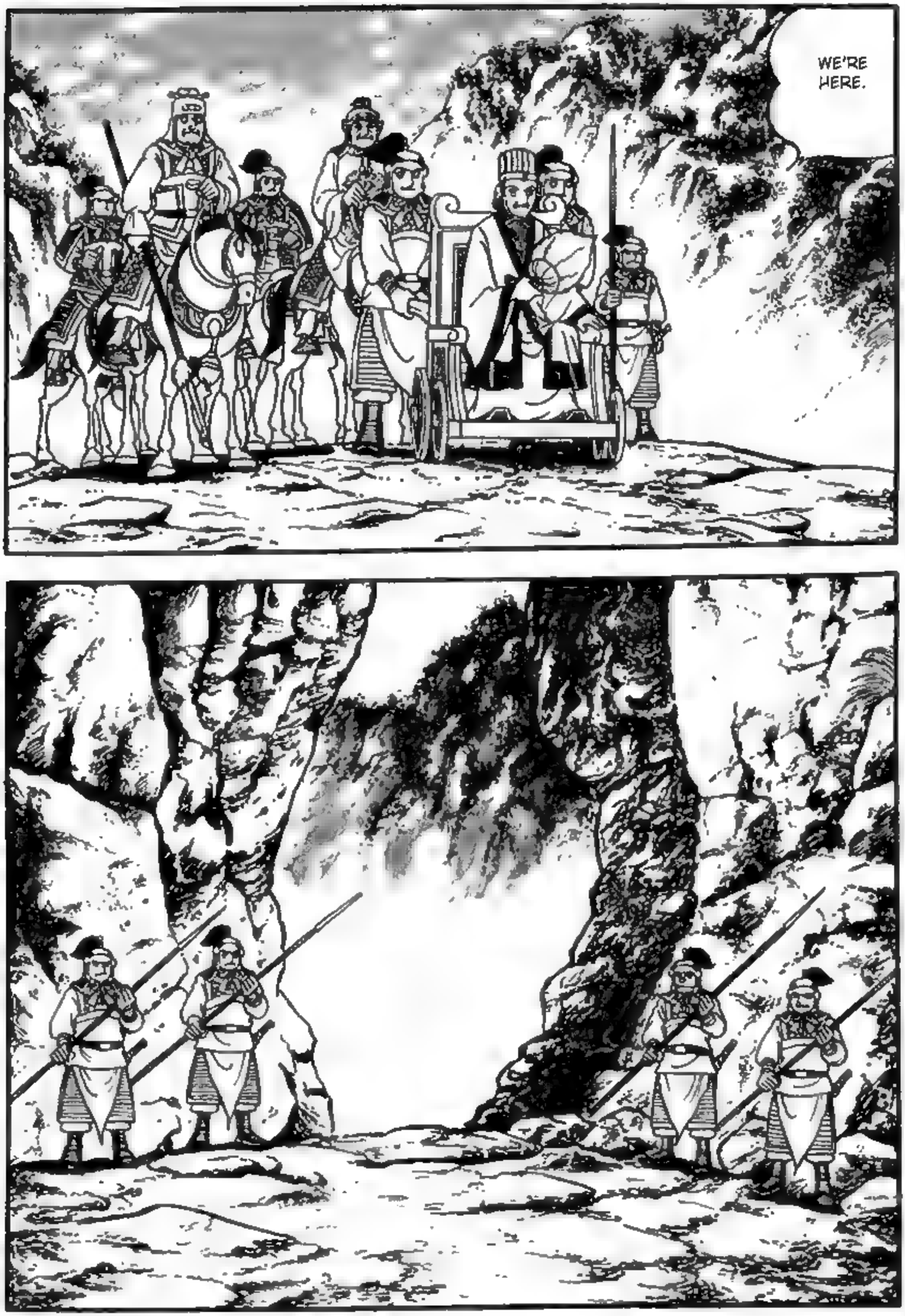
HAHA, I'M SURE SIMA YI WOULD BE OVERJOYED TO HEAR YOU SAY THAT, YANG YI.

CHANCELLOR, WE HAVE ALMOST TOO MUCH FOOD STORED AT SABER PASS, BUT THE CURRENT ROAD CONDITIONS ARE MAKING IT VERY DIFFICULT TO TRANSPORT ALL THAT FOOD TO OUR CAMPS OUT HERE. THE NUMBERS OF BROKEN WAGONS AND DEAD OXEN AND HORSES ARE INCREASING BY DAY.

YOU DO, SIR?

BUT WORRY NOT, I ALREADY HAVE SOMETHING IN THE WORKS TO RELIEVE THAT PROBLEM.

SEVERAL DAYS PASSED
TO SHANGFANG VALLEY.
WHERE ARE YOU TAKING US, CHANCELLOR?
YES, I'VE PLACED CARPENTERS THERE TO WORK OUT A SOLUTION TO OUR SUPPLY TRANSPORT PROBLEMS.
SHANG-FANG VALLEY?


WE'RE HERE.

WATCH YOUR STEP.

AHH!

OHHH!

WOODEN OXEN TRANSPORTS.

W-WHAT IN HEAVENS ARE THEY MAKING!?

IT'S A SPECIAL VEHICLE I'VE BEEN DESIGNING OVER THE YEARS TO HELP SOLVE OUR PROBLEMS WITH TRANSPORTING SUPPLIES.

WOODEN... OXEN TRANSPORTS? I'VE NEVER HEARD SUCH A THING BEFORE.

HOWEVER, THESE WOODEN OXEN REQUIRE NO ADDITIONAL FOOD OR WATER. THEY DO NOT SLEEP NOR BECOME SICK.

AS YOU KNOW, DRAFT ANIMALS REQUIRE ADDITIONAL FEED, SPECIAL HANDLERS, AND A STABLE OR PEN TO HOUSE THEM. THEY CAN ALSO BECOME SICK OR EASILY DIE FROM EXHAUSTION.

I NEVER KNEW YOU WERE COOKING UP SOMETHING SO INGENIOUS IN SUCH A REMOTE VALLEY.

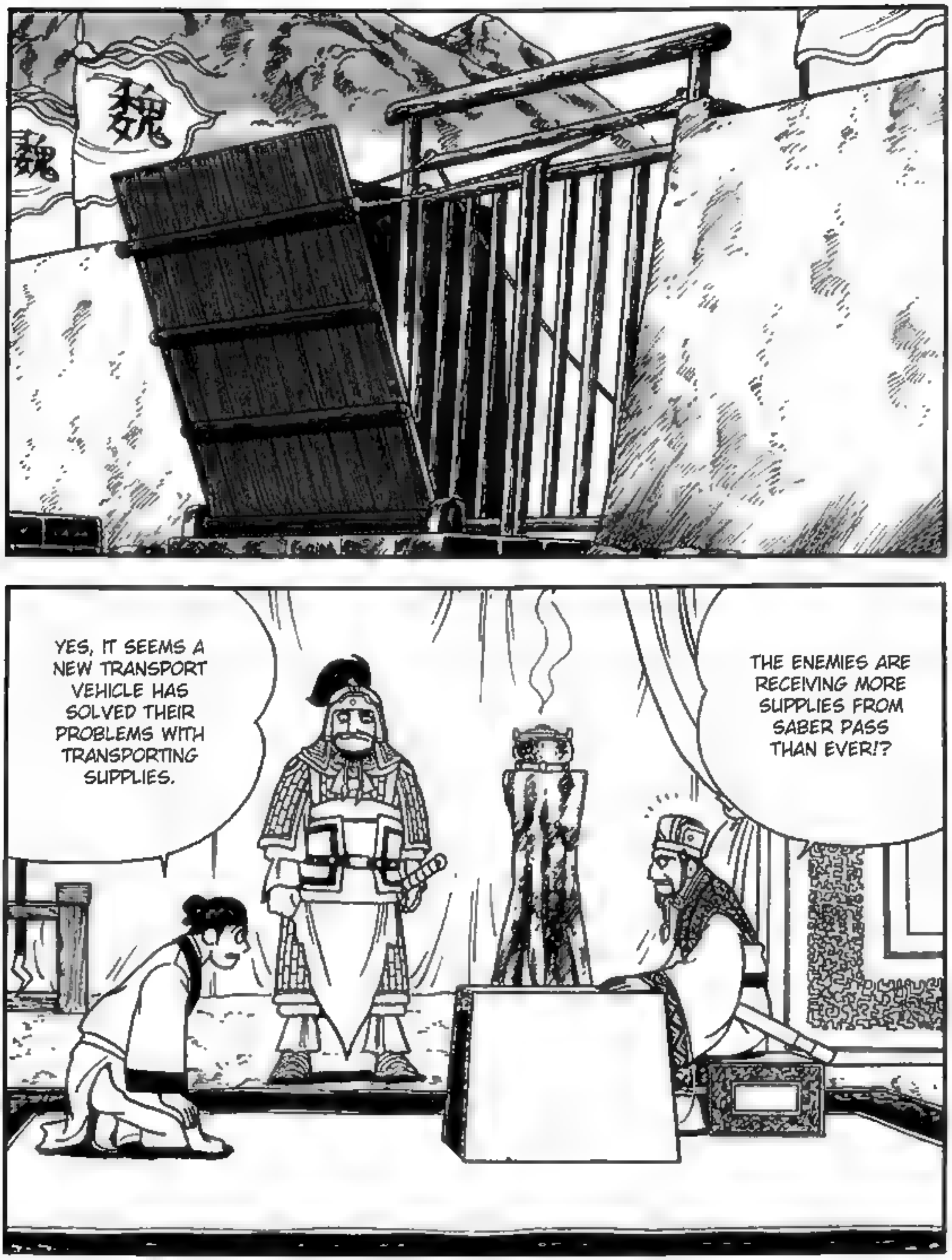
INDEED.

AND SINCE THEY ONLY HAVE ONE WHEEL, THEY CAN EASILY TRAVEL ALONG NARROW ROADS UNLIKE WAGONS OR CARTS.

KONGMING'S SECRET INVENTION WAS THEN ADOPTED FOR GENERAL SERVICE

THESE "WOODEN OXEN," WHICH WERE BASICALLY WHEELBARROWS, COULD CARRY ASTONISHING LOADS WITHOUT THE USUAL TROUBLES ASSOCIATED WITH DRAFT ANIMALS AND FOUR WHEELED WAGONS. THIS TECHNOLOGICAL MARVEL WOULD OVERTURN SIMA YI'S ENTIRE PLAN TO SIMPLY WAIT OUT THE SHU FORCES

UNMOVABLE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YES, IT SEEMS A NEW TRANSPORT VEHICLE HAS SOLVED THEIR PROBLEMS WITH TRANSPORTING SUPPLIES.
THE ENEMIES ARE RECEIVING MORE SUPPLIES FROM SABER PASS THAN EVER!?

YES, I BELIEVE THEY CALL IT A "WOODEN OX."

A NEW TRANSPORT VEHICLE?

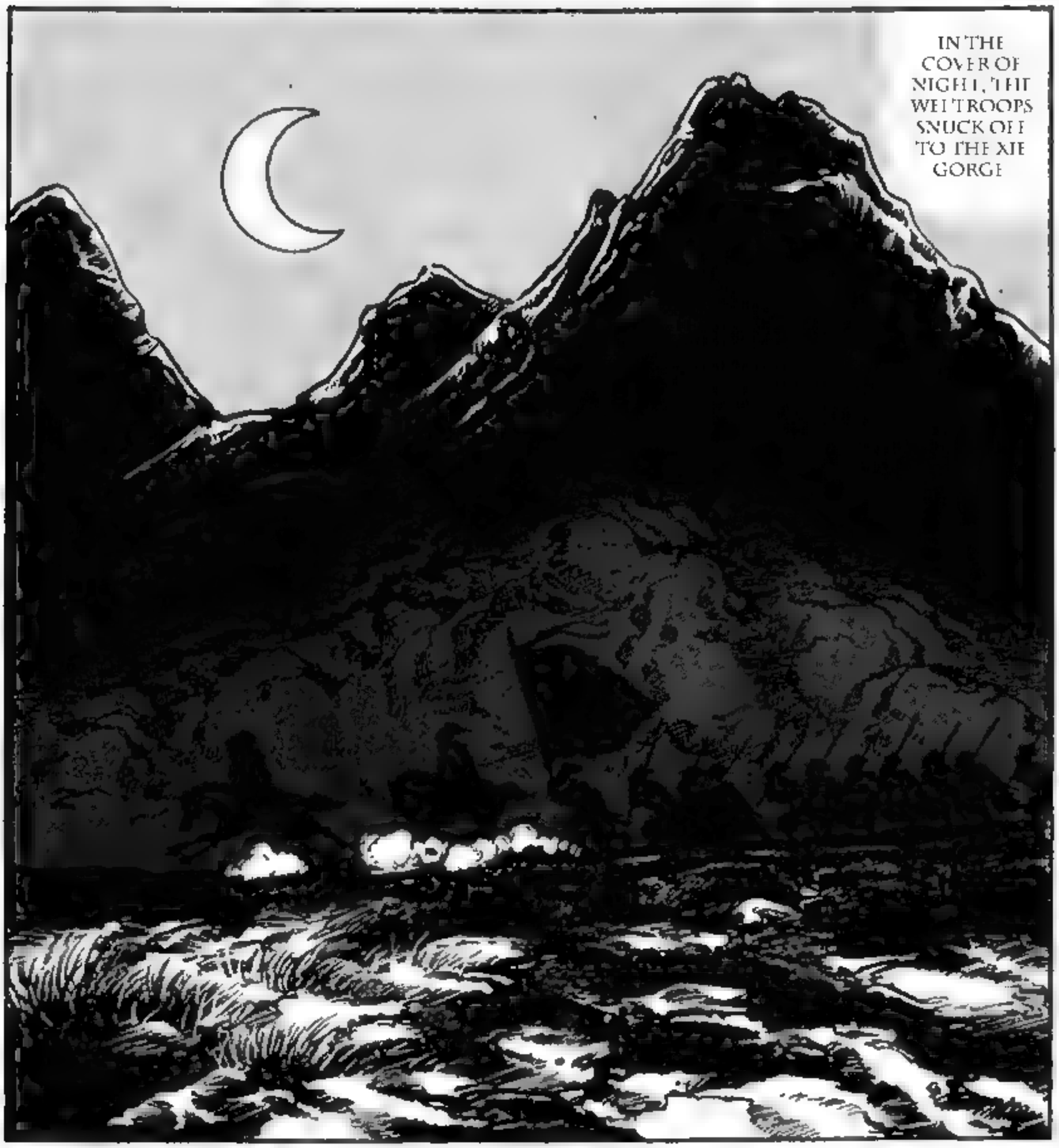
IF THAT'S THE CASE, THEN MY PLAN TO SIMPLY WAIT OUT THE ENEMIES IS NOW INEFFECTIVE...

IT'S LIKE A CART, BUT WITH ONLY ONE WHEEL, AND REQUIRES NEITHER HORSE NOR OXEN TO PULL IT. MEN CAN PUSH A WOODEN OX LOADED WITH GRAIN WITH EASE THROUGH NARROW PATHS AND STEEP TERRAIN.

YES, SIR.

ZHANG HU, YUE CHEN.

YES, SIR.
TAKE 500 TROOPS EACH TO THE XIE GORGE AND SEE IF YOU CAN CAPTURE 4 OR 5 OF THESE WOODEN OXEN.


IN THE COVER OF NIGHT, THE WEI TROOPS SNUCK OFF TO THE XIE GORGE

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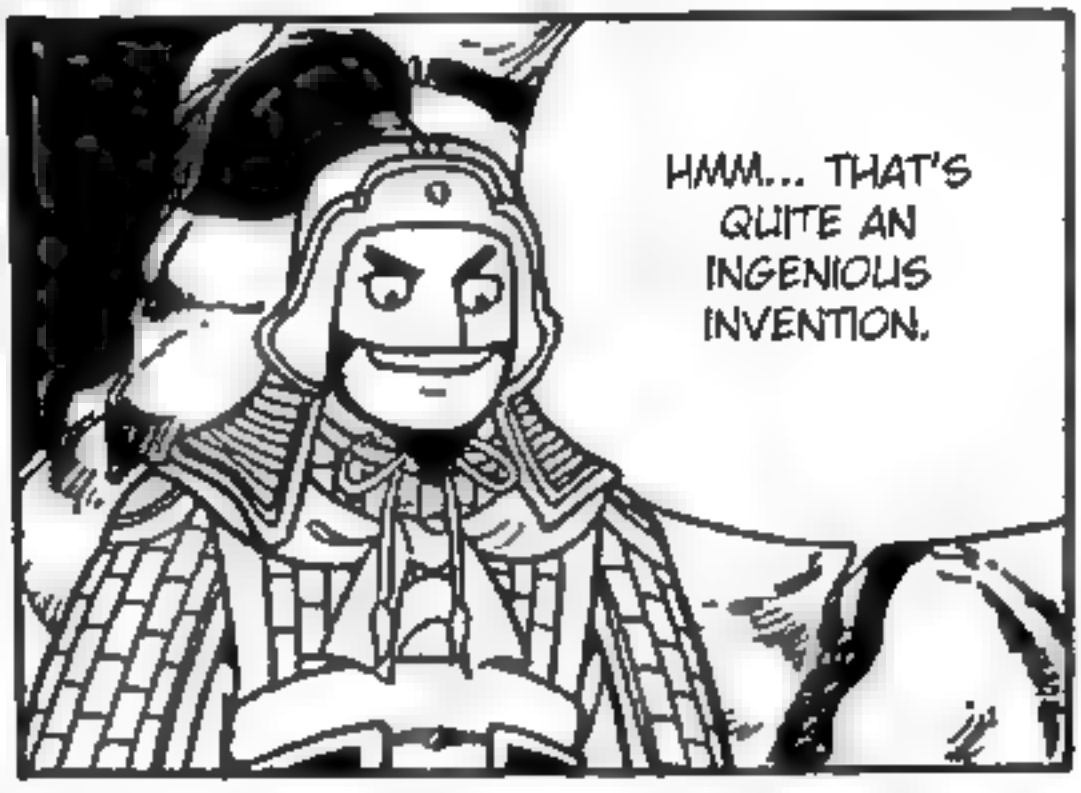
THAT'S THE WOODEN OX, SIR.

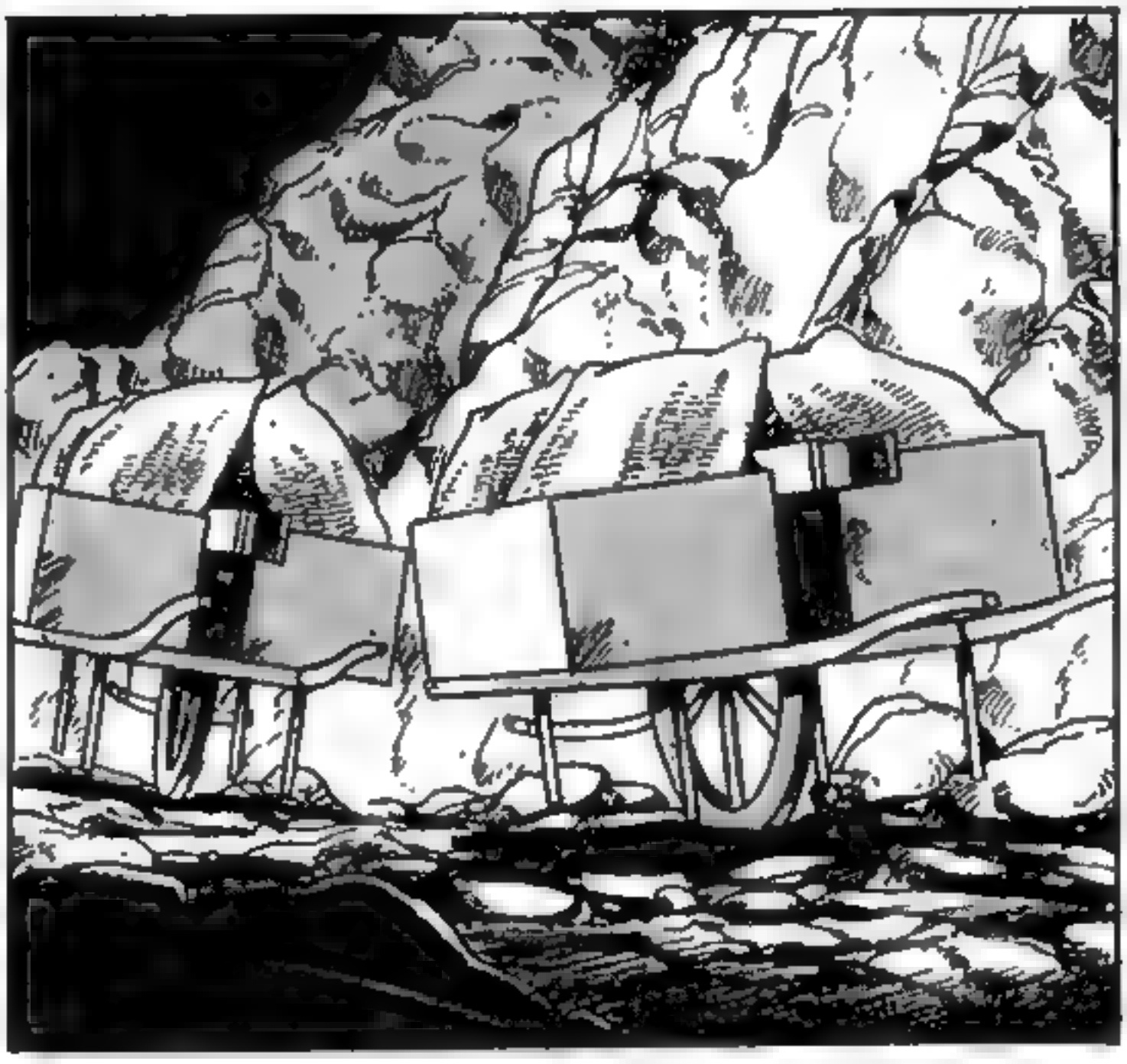
ALRIGHT, LET THEM PASS AND WE'LL SURPRISE THEIR REAR TO MAKE OFF WITH A FEW WOODEN OXEN.


HMM... THAT'S QUITE AN INGENIOUS INVENTION.

NOW!
WE! TROOPS!?

AGHHH!

DON'T BOTHER CHASING THEM! WE'RE ONLY HERE FOR THE WOODEN OXEN, SO LET'S GRAB A FEW AND LEAVE BEFORE MORE ENEMIES SHOW UP!



SO THIS IS THE SO-CALLED WOODEN OX?
木牛流馬
FASCINATING. A VEHICLE THAT REQUIRES NO DRAFT ANIMALS AND CAN TRAVEL ACROSS NARROW ROADS AND BRIDGES... A MARVELOUS INVENTION, INDEED.

YES, SIR.

GET OUR CRAFTSMEN TO START BUILDING REPLICAS USING THESE AS MODELS. THESE WOODEN OXEN WILL HELP GREATLY WITH THE GRAIN TRANSPORT FROM LONGXI.

THUS, THE WEI MANAGED TO SUCCESSFULLY REVERSE ENGINEER THE WOODEN OXEN AND START BUILDING THEM

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YES, THE ENEMIES WERE LYING IN WAIT FOR OUR SUPPLY CONVOY AT THE XIE GORGE.

A FEW OF OUR WOODEN OXEN WERE CAPTURED?

I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT HAVE CAUGHT UP TO ME, SIMA YI, BUT I STILL HAVE YOU DANCING ON MY PALM...!

HAHAHAHA! EXCELLENT, I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR THIS!

I LAUGH BECAUSE THE ENEMIES COPIED MY WOODEN OXEN WITHOUT TRULY COMPREHENDING IT.

WHY DO YOU LAUGH, CHANCELLOR? HAVE THE ENEMIES NOT UNFAIRLY BENEFITED FROM YOUR OWN INVENTION?

THERE IS LITTLE I CAN DO WHILE THE ENEMIES REFUSE TO GO ON THE OFFENSIVE, BUT WITH THIS NEW DEVELOPMENT, THERE'S A PLAN I CAN USE TO POSSIBLY CAPTURE SIMA YI'S HEAD.

YES, SIR.

SEND OUT SPIES AND HAVE THEM REPORT BACK AS SOON AS POSSIBLE ONCE THEY SEE WEI SUPPLY TRAINS USING MY WOODEN OXEN.

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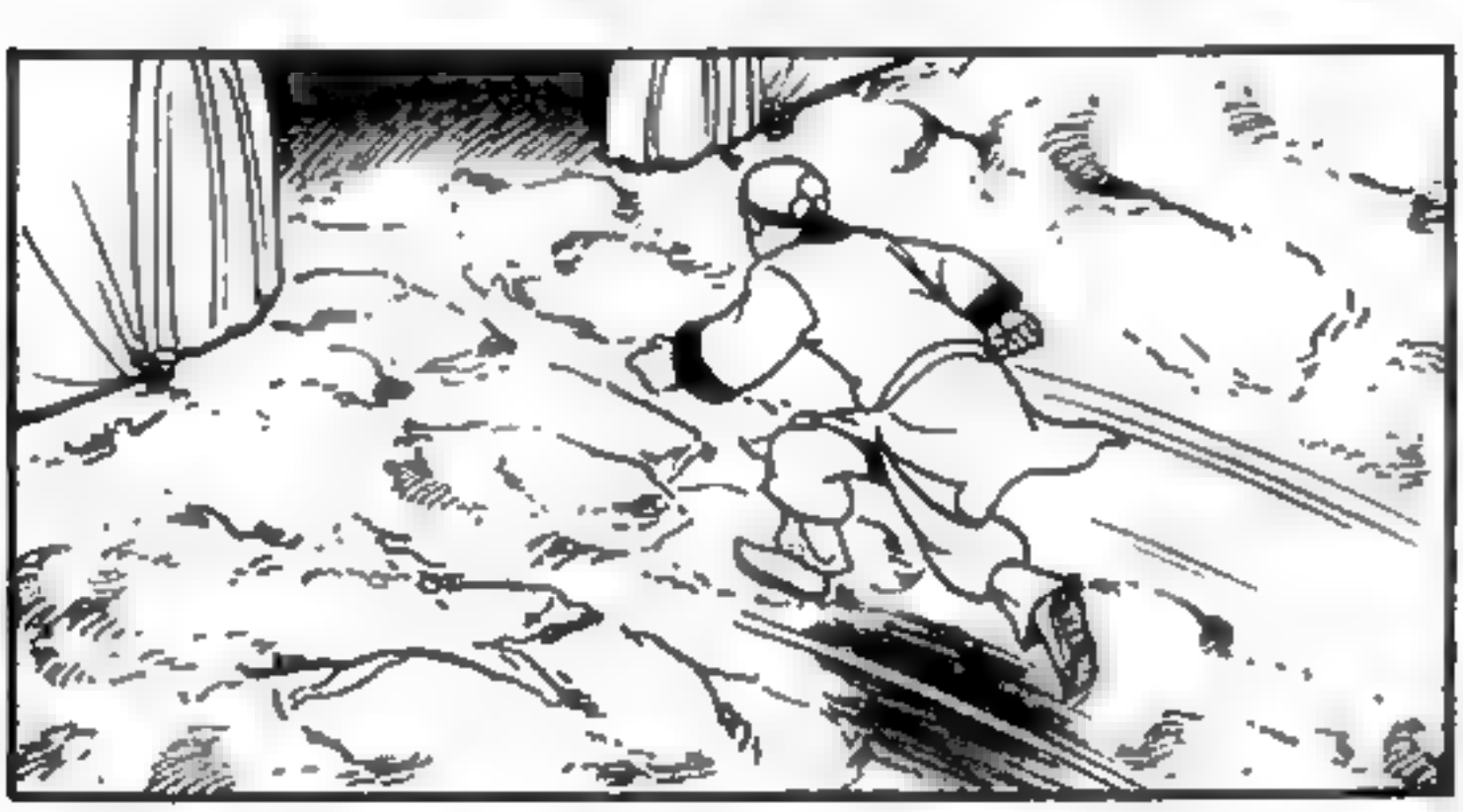

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WANG PING.

YES?

GOOD.

THE WEI SUPPLY TRAINS HAVE ADOPTED HEAVY USE OF THE WOODEN OXEN, CHANCELLOR.

IF YOU ENCOUNTER GUO HUAI'S TROOPS ALONG THE WAY, TELL THEM THAT YOU ARE THE ARMED ESCORT FOR THE SUPPLY TRAINS, AND YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO PASS BY.

TAKE 2000 TROOPS DISGUISED AS WEI SOLDIERS TO THE ROAD THAT CONNECTS LONGXI TO BEIYUAN. IF YOU LEAVE NOW, YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO REACH THE AREA NEAR BEIYUAN BY NIGHT.

BUT THEN WOULD WE NOT HAVE TO FIGHT GUO HUAI'S TROOPS WHILE PUSHING ALL THE WOODEN OXEN?

ONCE YOU'VE REACHED THE ROAD, AMBUSH ONE OF THE ENEMY SUPPLY TRAINS TO TAKE THE WOODEN OXEN BACK TO BEIYUAN. BY THEN, WORD SHOULD HAVE REACHED GUO HUAI ABOUT YOUR ACTIONS AND HE WILL LEAVE HIS FORT TO TAKE BACK HIS GRAIN.

THE TONGUE?

NO, ONCE THEY APPROACH, SIMPLY TURN THE TONGUE INSIDE EACH WOODEN OX TO THE LEFT AND FLEE.

SINCE THE ENEMIES WILL BE MORE INTENT ON RECOVERING THEIR STOLEN GRAIN, THEY WILL NOT CHASE YOU FAR IF YOU FLEE AFTERWARDS.

YES, THERE IS A TONGUE INSIDE THE WOODEN OX, AND TURNING IT WILL LOCK THE WHEEL.

UNDERSTOOD, SIR. I WILL LEAVE AT ONCE.

THE OTHER OFFICERS WILL TAKE OVER THE OPERATION AFTER THEN.

AFTER WANG PING'S TROOPS FLEE, YOU WILL ATTACK THE WEI TROOPS TRYING TO MOVE THEIR FROZEN WOODEN OXEN. YOU WILL ALSO DISGUISE YOUR TROOPS.

YES?

ZHANG YI.

NO, YOUR TROOPS WILL BE DISGUISED AS GHOSTS WITH GOURDS STUFFED WITH SULPHUR SMOKE HANGING FROM THEIR WAISTS.

DISGUISED AS WEI SOLDIERS?

AHH, I SEE!

AND ONCE YOUR SUPERNATURAL TROOPS ARRIVE, IT WILL BE EASY TO ROUT THEM.

THE ENEMIES WILL ALREADY BE SPOOKED BY THE FROZEN WOODEN OXEN.

YES, SIR.

WHEN THE ENEMIES FLEE, TURN THE TONGUE BACK TO THE RIGHT TO START MOVING THE WOODEN OXEN AGAIN.

RIGHT.

YES, SIR.

WEI YAN AND JIANG WEI. YOU TWO WILL EACH LEAD 10,000 TROOPS TO BEIYUAN AND REINFORCE ZHANG NI'S TROOPS.

HOW DO YOU KNOW IF SIMA YI WILL COME?

LIAO HUA AND ZHANG YI. YOU TWO WILL EACH TAKE 5000 TROOPS TO CUT OFF SIMA YI'S RETREAT ROUTE.

YES, SIR.

I'M SURE HE WILL NOT WANT TO LOSE HIS PRECIOUS GRAIN FROM LONGXI AS WELL AS THE NEW WOODEN OXEN OF HIS OWN.

YES, SIR.

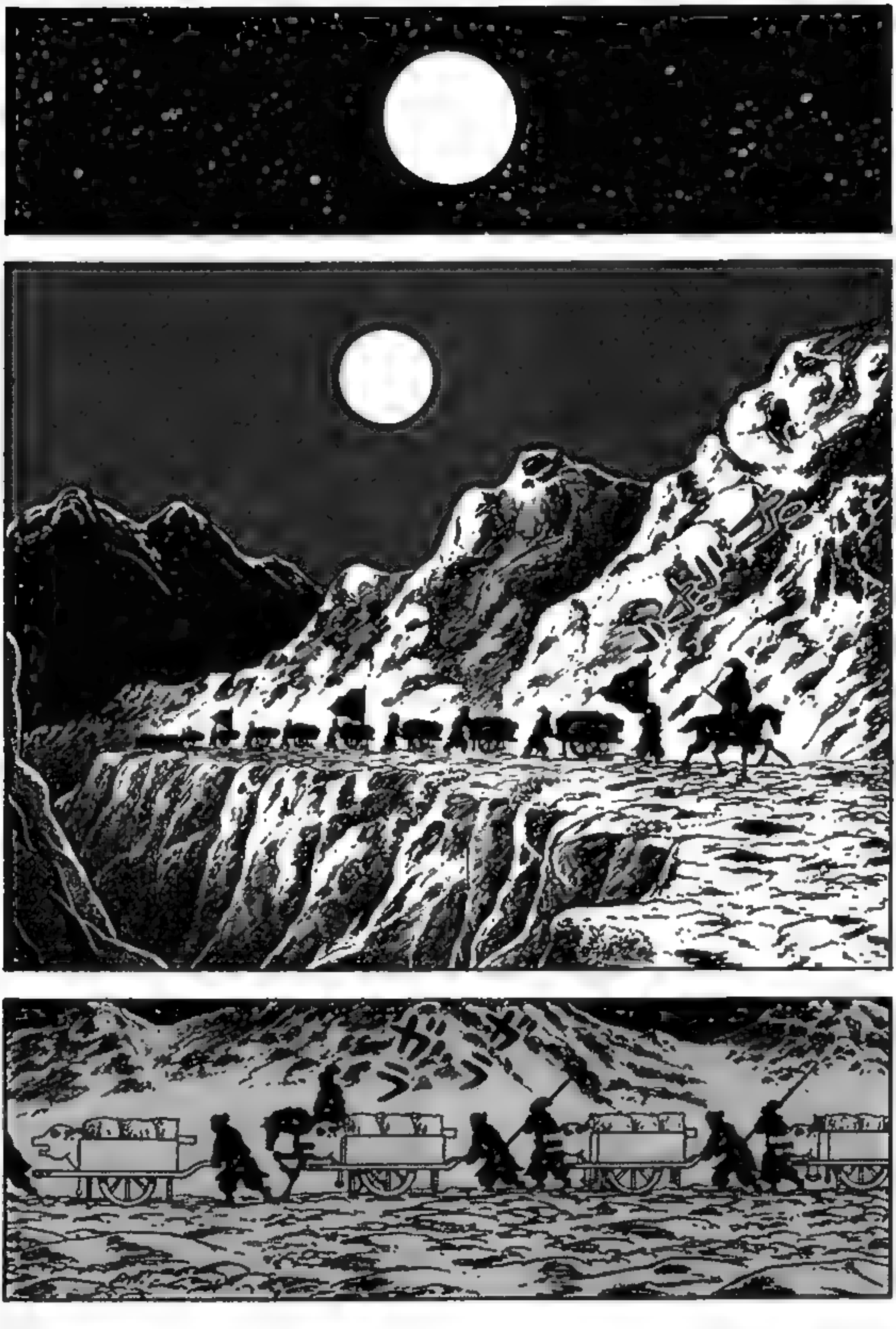
AS FOR YOU, MA DAI AND MA ZHONG, I WANT YOU TWO TO ATTACK THE ENEMIES ALONG THE SOUTHERN RIVERBANK OF THE WEI RIVER TO DISTRACT THEM.

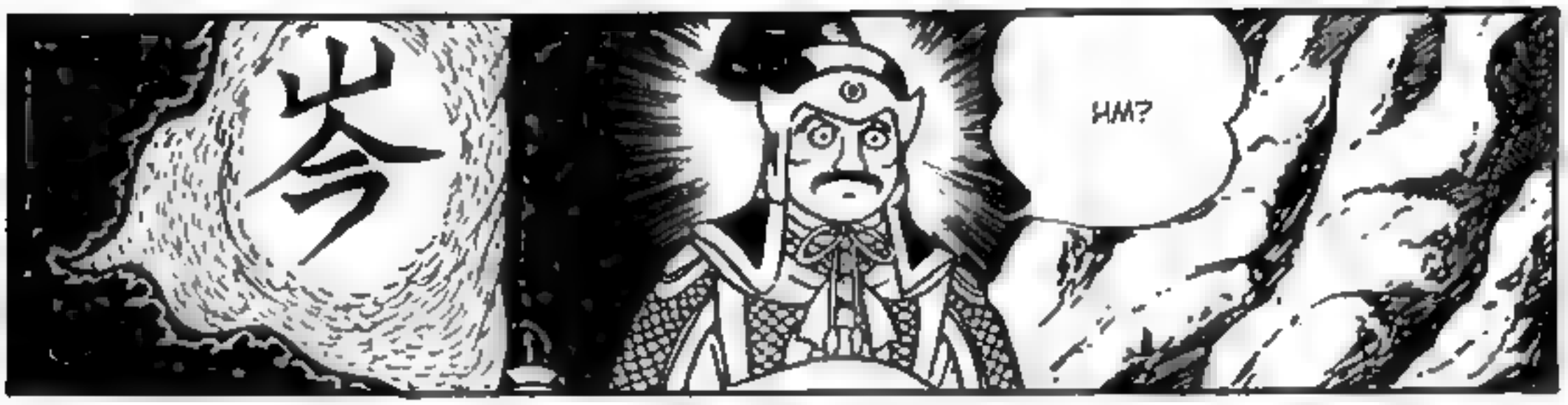
OF COURSE.

YES, SIR.

KEEP IN MIND THAT THE TRUE OBJECTIVE OF THIS PLAN IS NOT TO STEAL THE ENEMY'S GRAIN, BUT TO KILL SIMA YI.

THE SHU GENERALS MOVED OUT FROM CAMP TO CARRY OUT KONGMING'S AMBITIOUS PLAN




HM?

WE ARE THE ARMED ESCORT TO THE SUPPLY TRAIN!

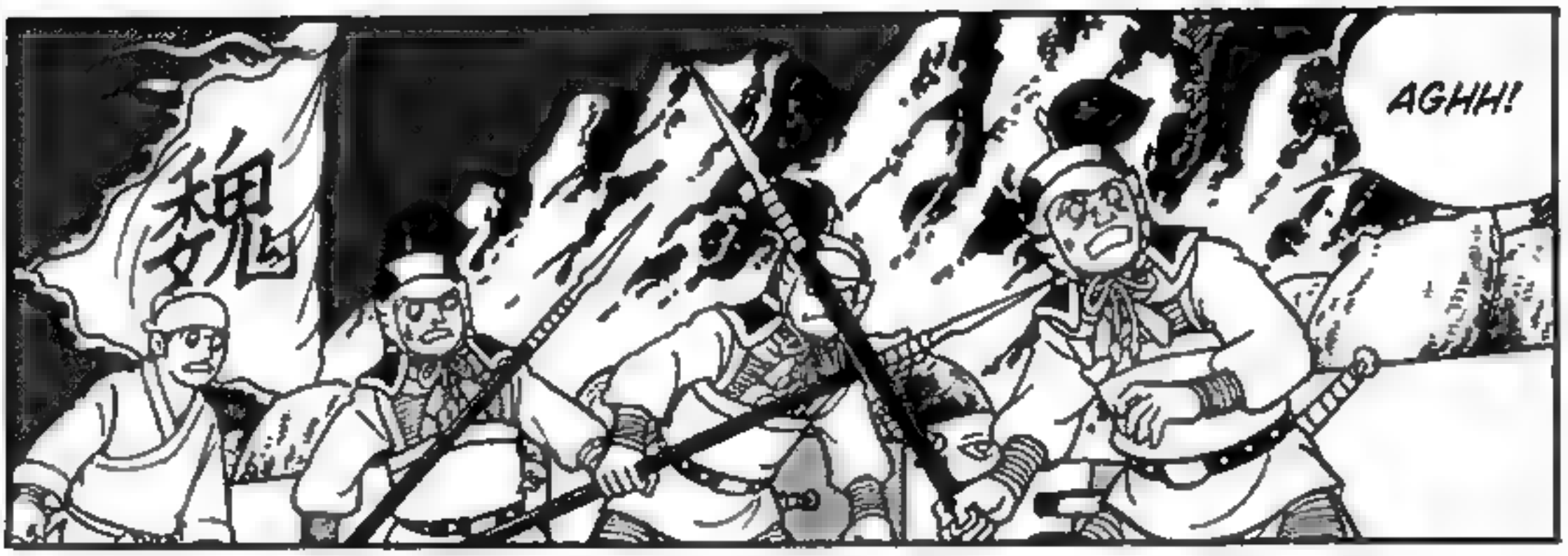
WHO GOES THERE!?

AH, BUT WE ARE THE ARMED ESCORT FOR SHU.

DON'T BE STUPID! WE ARE THE SUPPLY TRAIN'S ARMED ESCORT!

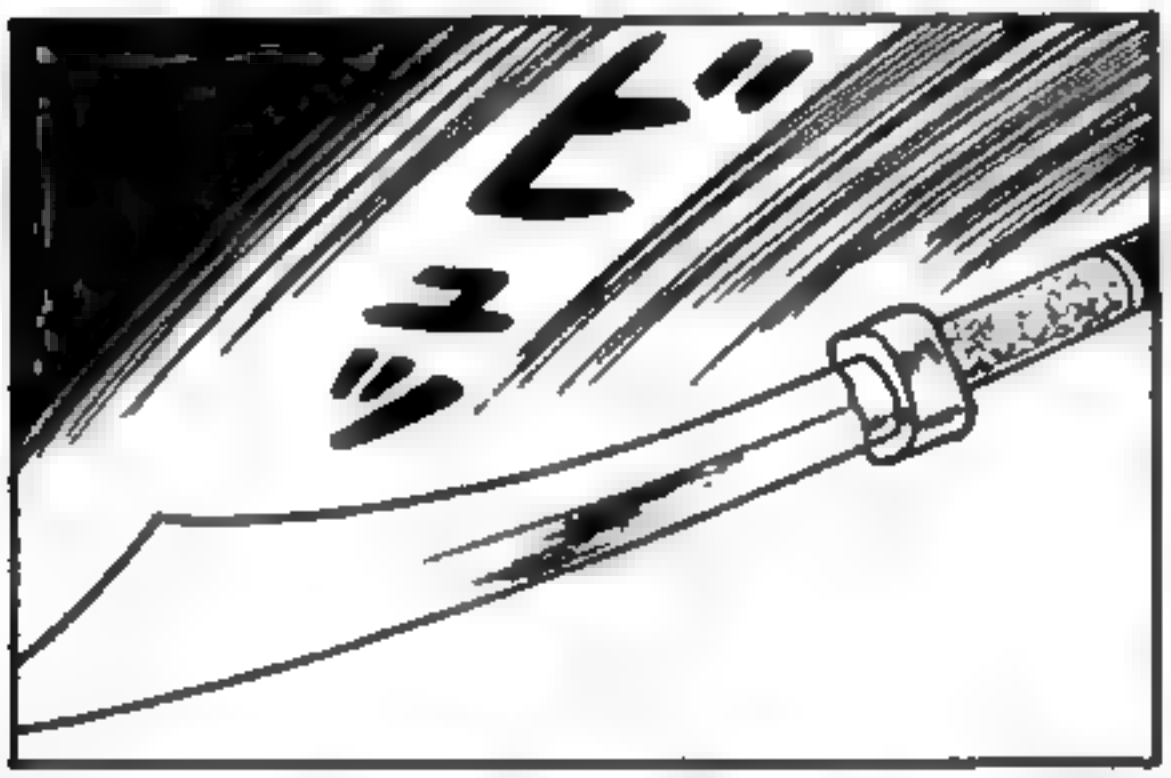
ATTACK!

F-FOR SHU!?


AGHH!

I AM WANG PING! FIGHT ME!

DO NOT FALTER! PROTECT THE GRAIN!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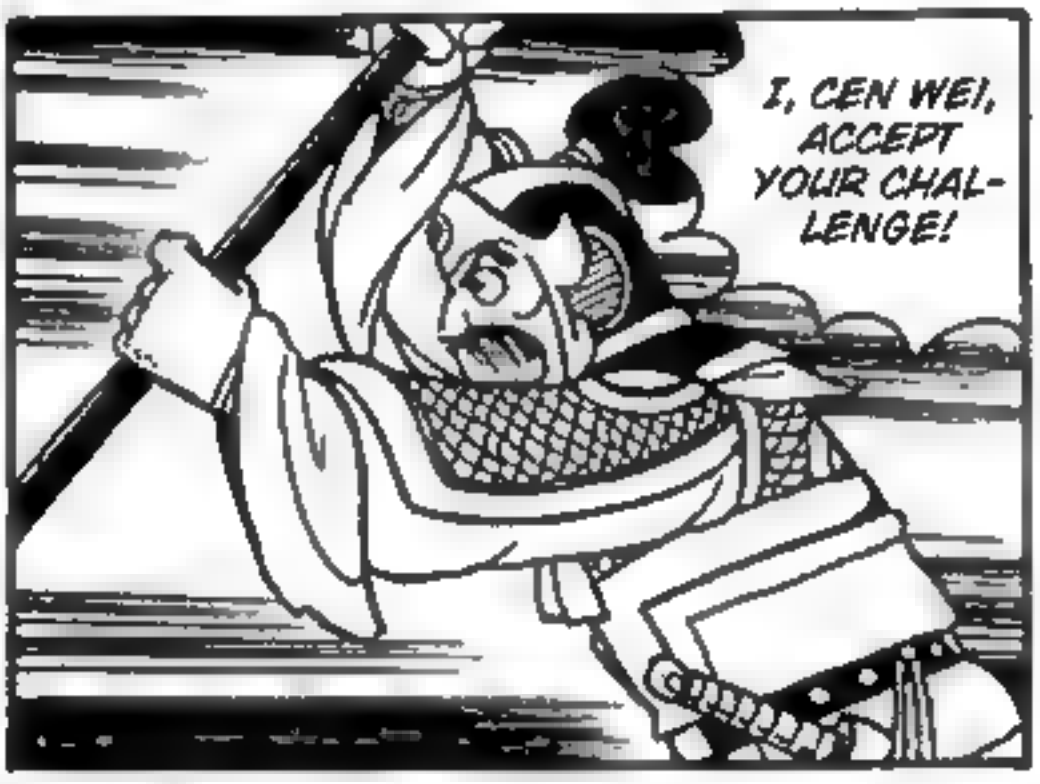
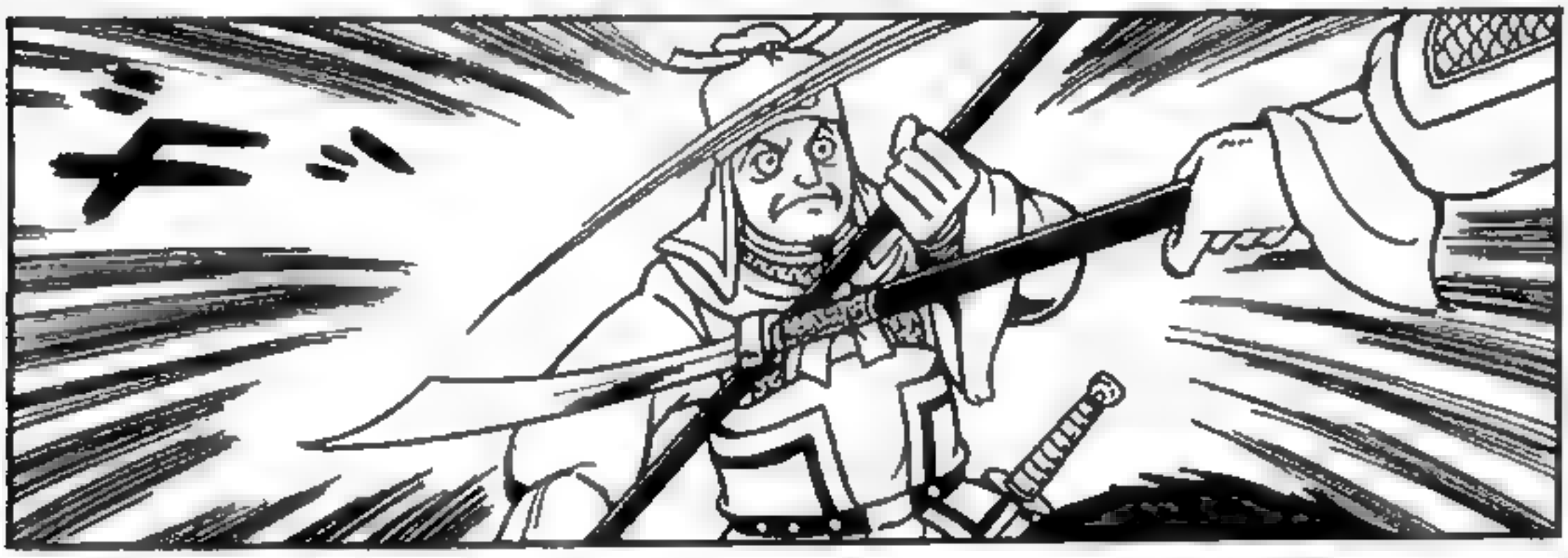

I, CEN WEI, ACCEPT YOUR CHAL-LENGE!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GAHHH!

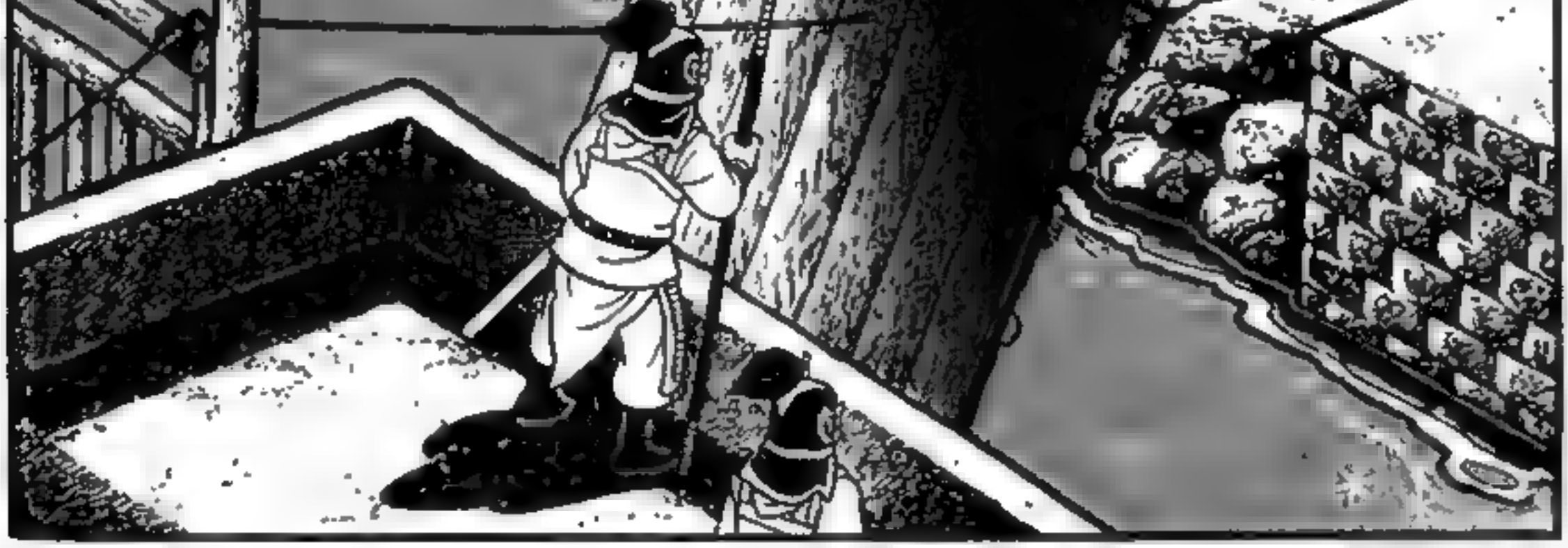
OH NO!
OUR GENERAL IS DEAD!

AHHH! GENERAL!

AHHH!
RUN FOR IT!

TAKE THE WOODEN OXEN!

HUFF
HUFF
PANT
PANT
WHAT HAPPENED?
IT'S AN EMER-GENCY!


WHAT!?
WE'RE SOLDIERS OF THE SUPPLY TRAIN'S ARMED ESCORT, BUT WE WERE AMBUSHED BY ENEMIES AND OUR GENERAL WAS SLAIN!

GENERAL!
WHAT!?
AN ENEMY AMBUSH HAS KILLED CEN WEI TO ROUT THE SUPPLY TRAIN'S ESCORT TROOPS AND STEAL OUR GRAIN!
WHAT IS IT!?

ATTENDANTS! BRING ME MY ARMOUR!

GET THE TROOPS READY FOR ACTION!

THOSE INCOMPETENT ESCORTS!

IF THE ENEMIES HAVE TAKEN OUR GRAIN, THEN THEY WILL BE MARCHING AT A SLOW PACE! LET US CATCH UP TO THEM AND TAKE WHAT'S RIGHTFULLY OURS!

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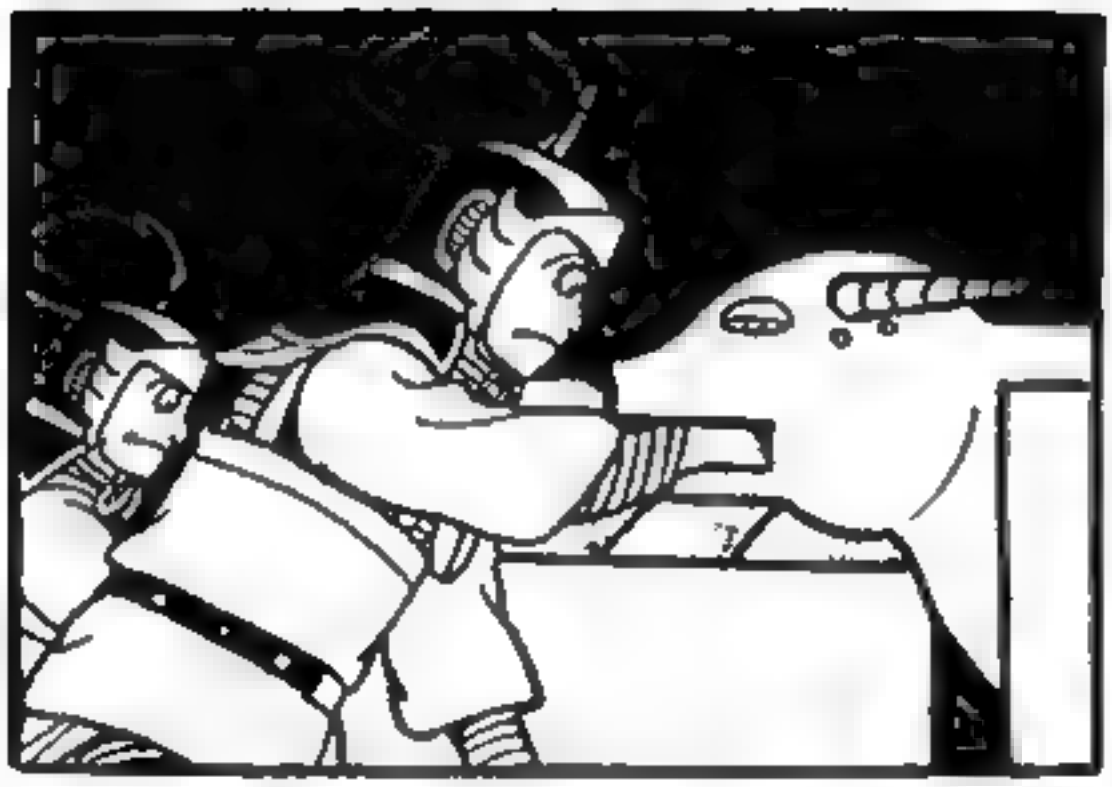
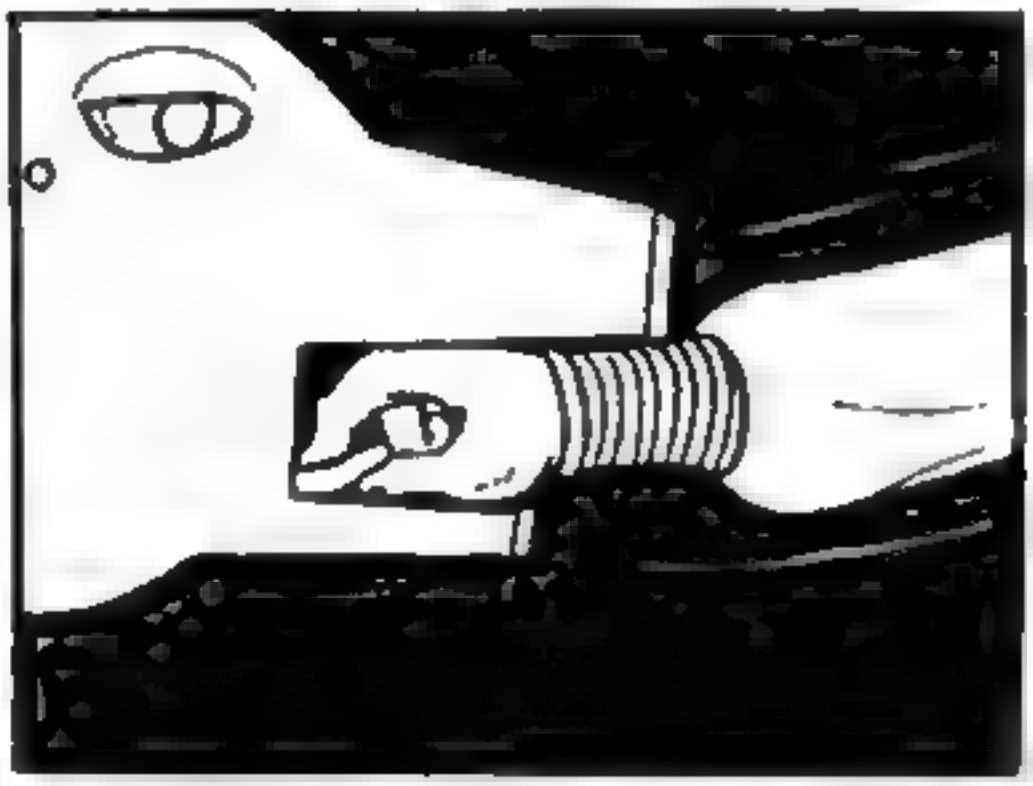
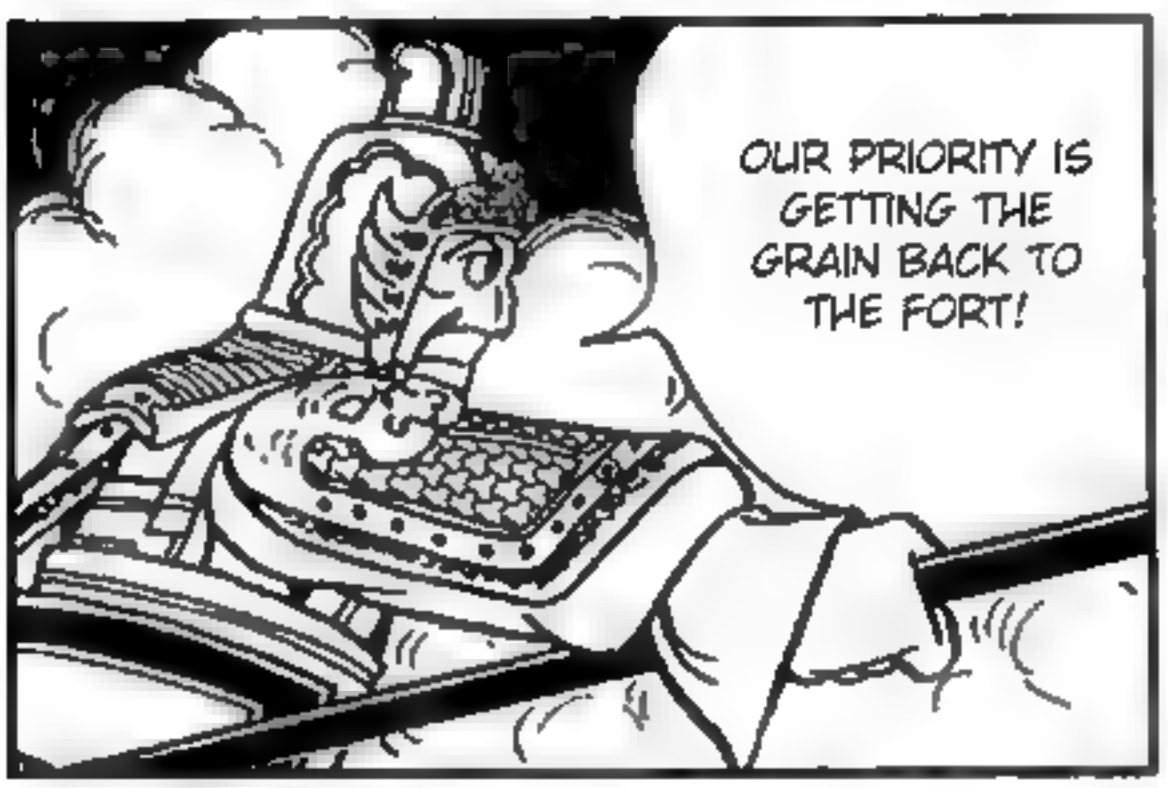


TURN THE TONGUES TO THE LEFT!

ABANDON THE OXEN AND WITHDRAW!



THE ENEMIES ARE FLEEING!


OUR PRIORITY IS GETTING THE GRAIN BACK TO THE FORT!

DO NOT GIVE CHASE!

YES, SIR!

WHAT'S... GOING... ON...?

HM?

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DON'T BE ABSURD! THE ENEMIES WERE PUSHING THEM JUST FINE A MOMENT AGO!

GENERAL GUO HUAI! THE OXEN REFUSE TO MOVE!

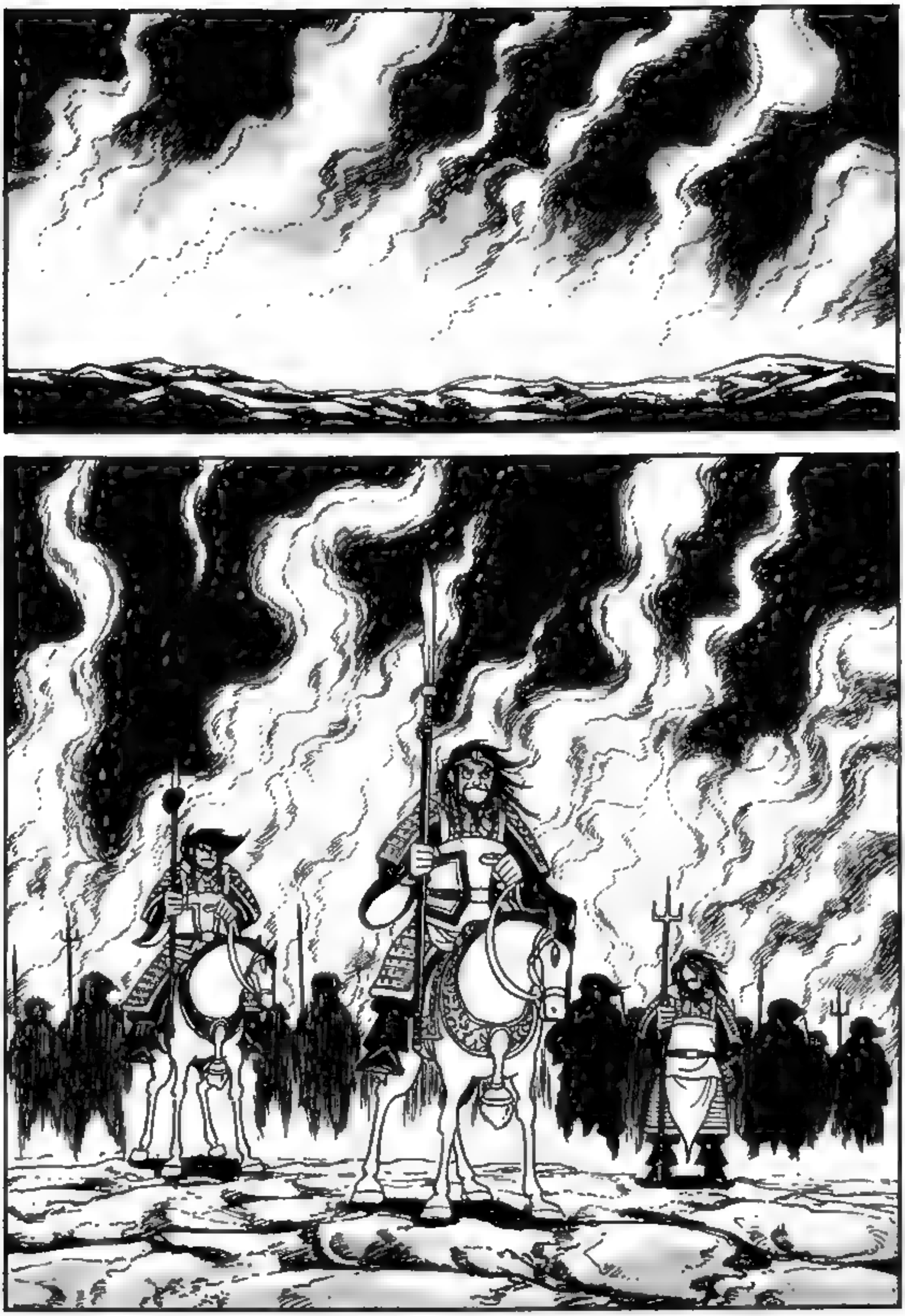
I KNOW, BUT... AS YOU CAN SEE, SIR... THEY WON'T BUDGE... AN INCH!

WHAT'S GOING ON...!?

HOW THE HELL WERE THE ENEMIES PUSHING THIS THING!?

SIR, OVER THERE!

HM?



THEY'RE WARRIORS FROM HELL!

W-WHO IN HEAVENS ARE THEY!?

FOR THE NATURALLY SUPERSTITIOUS MEN OF THIS ERA, THEIR TERROR WAS REAL.

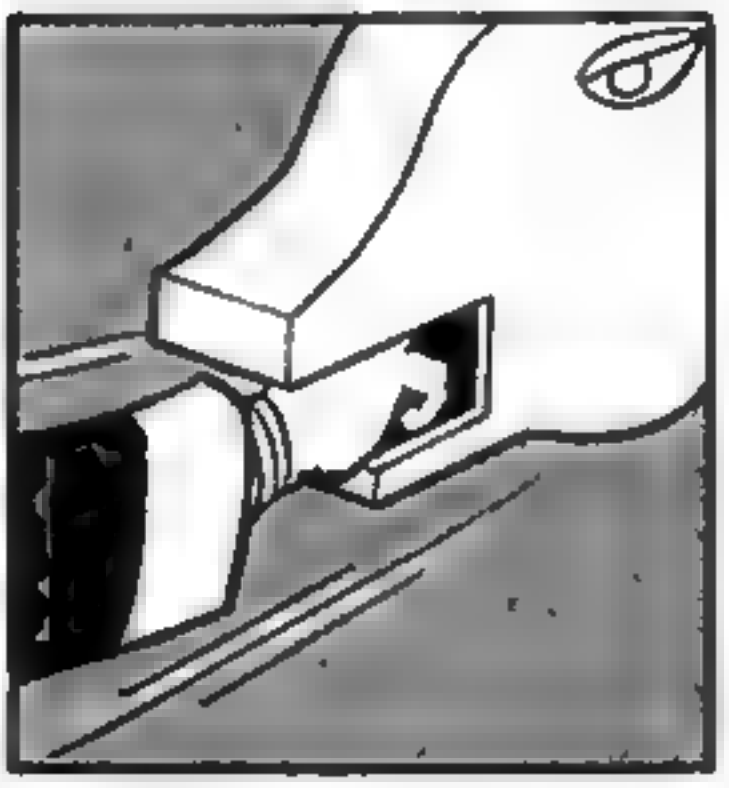
AGHHH!

THE WOODEN OXEN MUST BE FROZEN IN PLACE BECAUSE OF THEIR MAGIC!

TURN THE TONGUES BACK TO THE RIGHT AND LET'S HAUL THE WOODEN OXEN!

HA, IT'S JUST AS THE CHANCELLOR PREDICTED!

LET'S MOVE!



SEE, I KNEW IT WAS THEIR MAGIC THAT HAD FROZEN THEM IN PLACE A MOMENT AGO!

THE OXEN ARE MOVING AGAIN!

WE CANNOT LET OUR GRAIN BE STOLEN BEFORE OUR VERY EYES! LET'S TAKE IT BACK BY FORCE!

THE FEARLESS GUO HUAI DID NOT BUY INTO SUPERSTITION AND FELT THAT THERE WAS SOME TRICK AT PLAY

KONGMING MAY BE PULLING ANOTHER FAST ONE OVER OUR HEADS!

NO, THAT REMAINS UNCLEAR AS OF YET!

B-BUT THEY'RE NOT HUMAN!

WHAT IF THEY REALLY ARE GHOSTS?

BUT...

THIS WILL BE MY GREATEST DISGRACE IF I LET NUMERICALLY INFERIOR ENEMIES STEAL GRAIN RIGHT UNDER MY WATCH!

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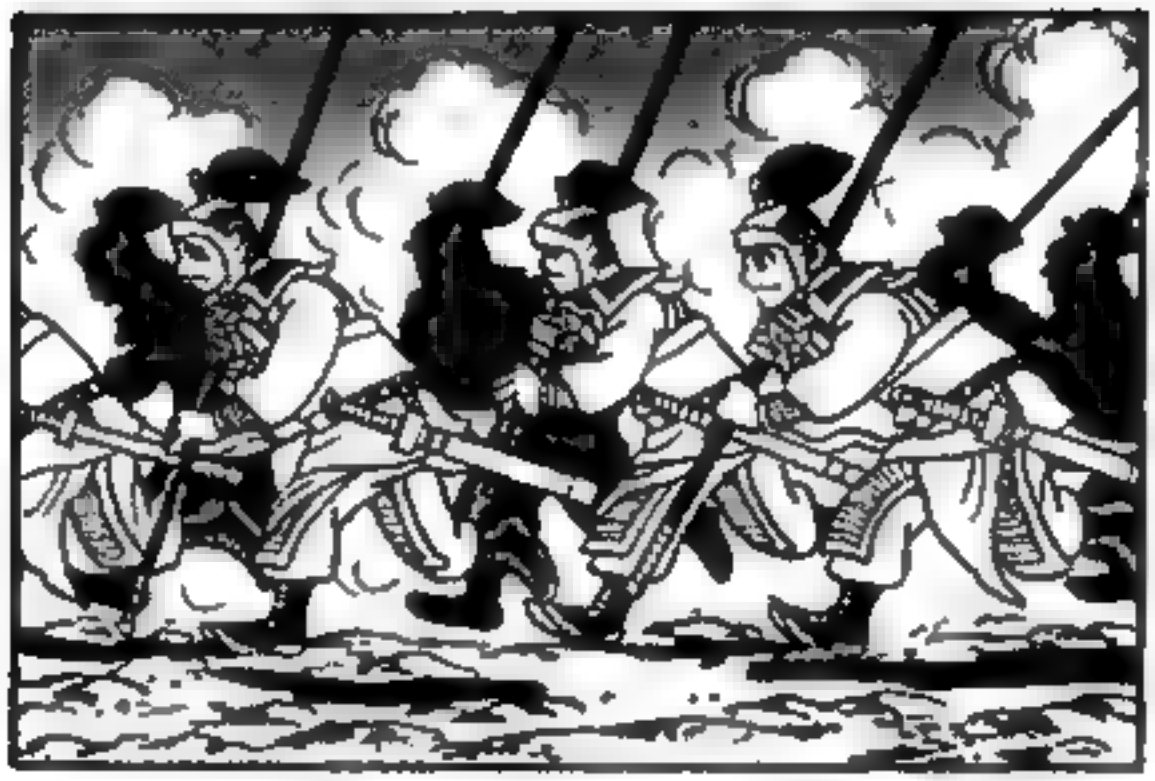
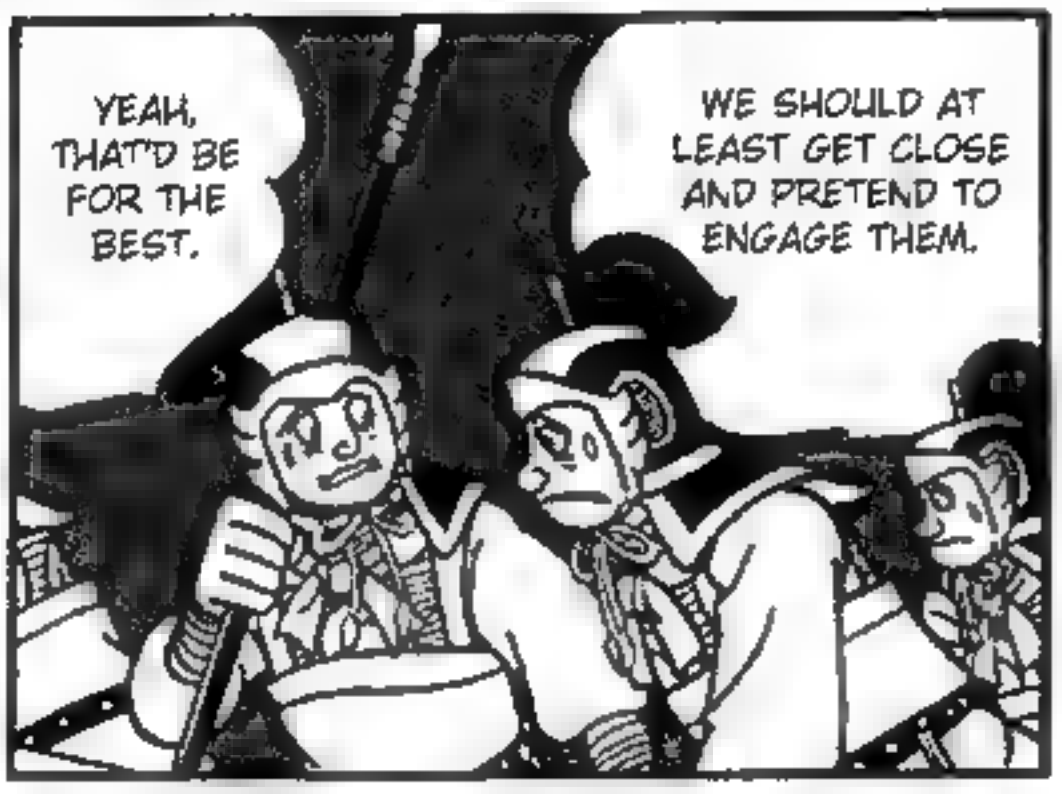
THEN WE'LL TEST IF THEY ARE OF FLESH AND BLOOD WITH OUR BLADES!

I WILL PERSONALLY CUT DOWN ANY MAN WHO TURNS HIS BACK TO THE ENEMIES!




YEAH, THAT'D BE FOR THE BEST.
WE SHOULD AT LEAST GET CLOSE AND PRETEND TO ENGAGE THEM.

THUS, THE WEI TROOPS TURNED AROUND IN SPITE OF THEIR FLAGGING MORALE

HM?

IT WAS EXACTLY THEN THE NEXT ATTACK CAME

WHA!

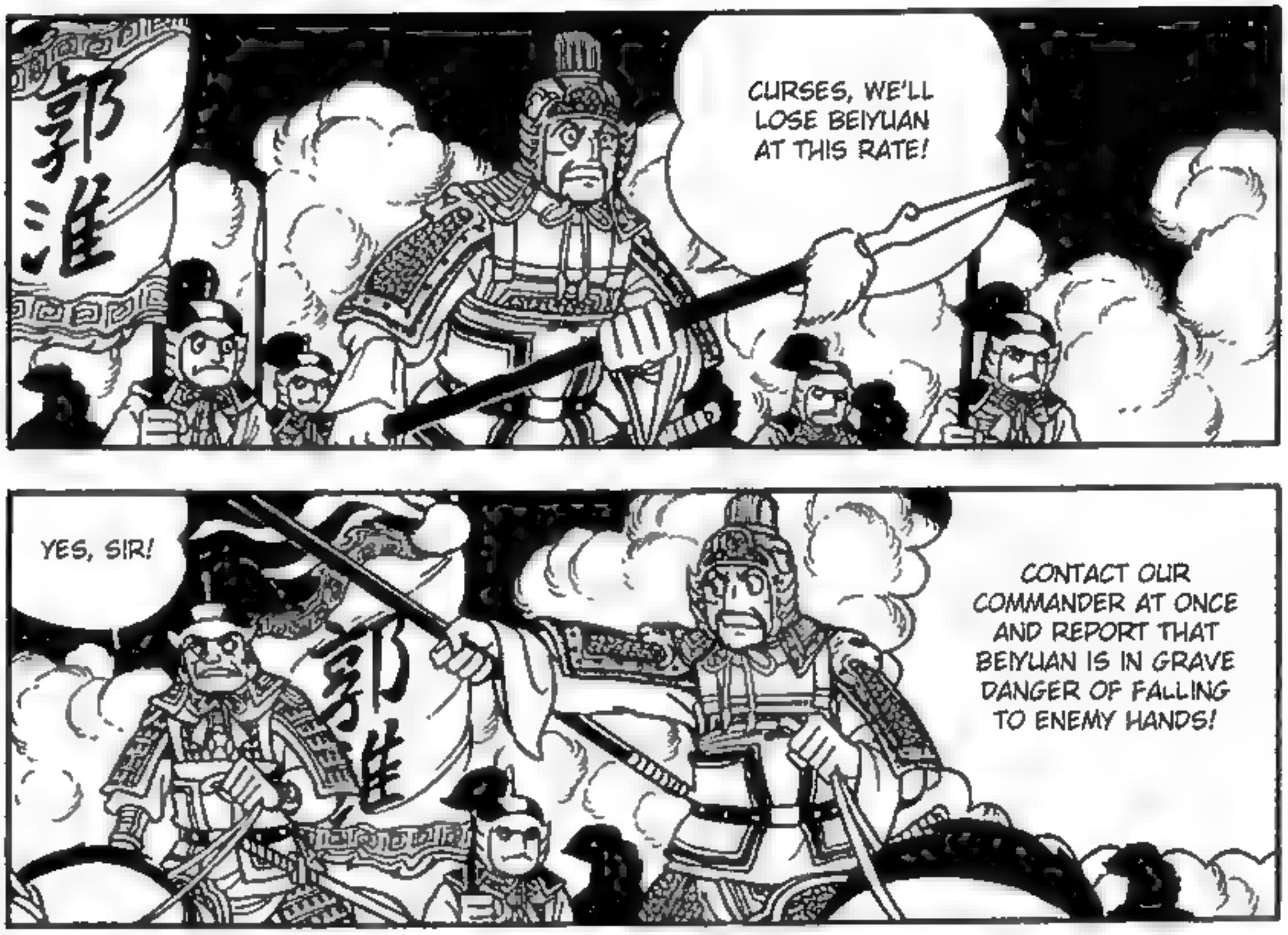
AHH!

WEI YAN AND JIANG WEI'S TROOPS ATTACKED FROM THE RIGHT AND LEFT

DO NOT FALTER! FIGHT BACK!

SHU TROOPS!?

WANG PING'S TROOPS ALSO RETURNED TO JOIN THE FIGHT.
GUO HUAI'S TROOPS NOW FOUND ITSELF ATTACKED FROM THREE SIDES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CURSES, WE'LL LOSE BEIYUAN AT THIS RATE!
YES, SIR!
CONTACT OUR COMMANDER AT ONCE AND REPORT THAT BEIYUAN IS IN GRAVE DANGER OF FALLING TO ENEMY HANDS!

DISCARDED CAP

YES, HE'S DESPERATELY TRYING TO FIGHT OFF THE ENEMIES COMING FROM THREE DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS! IF HE LOSES, I FEAR BEIYUAN WILL BE LOST!
GUO HUAI'S TROOPS HAVE BEEN AMBUSHED!?

READY THE TROOPS!

IT'LL BE HARDER TO DEFEND AGAINST THE ENEMIES IF THEY USE BEIYUAN AS A BASE TO THREATEN OUR FLANK.

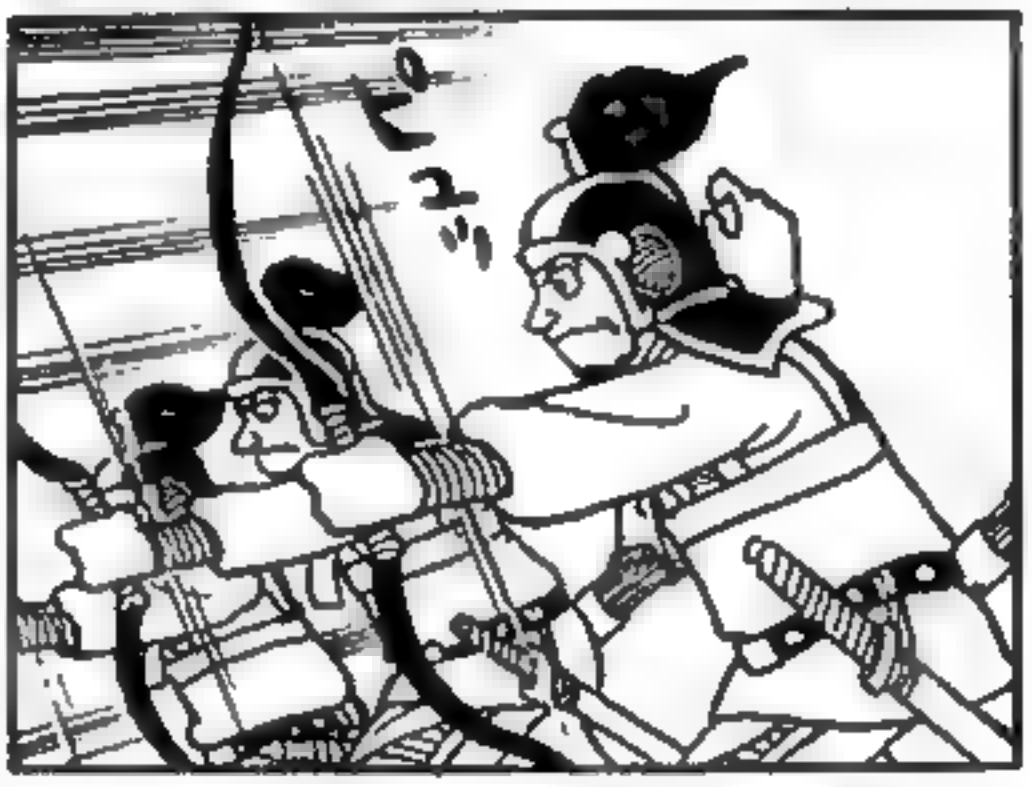
WE MUST RUSH TO GUO HUAI'S AID!

司馬

SO HE'S COME?
SIMA YI'S TROOPS HAVE APPEARED, GENERAL!

SHOWER THEM WITH ARROWS!

NOW!



AGHH!

UGH!

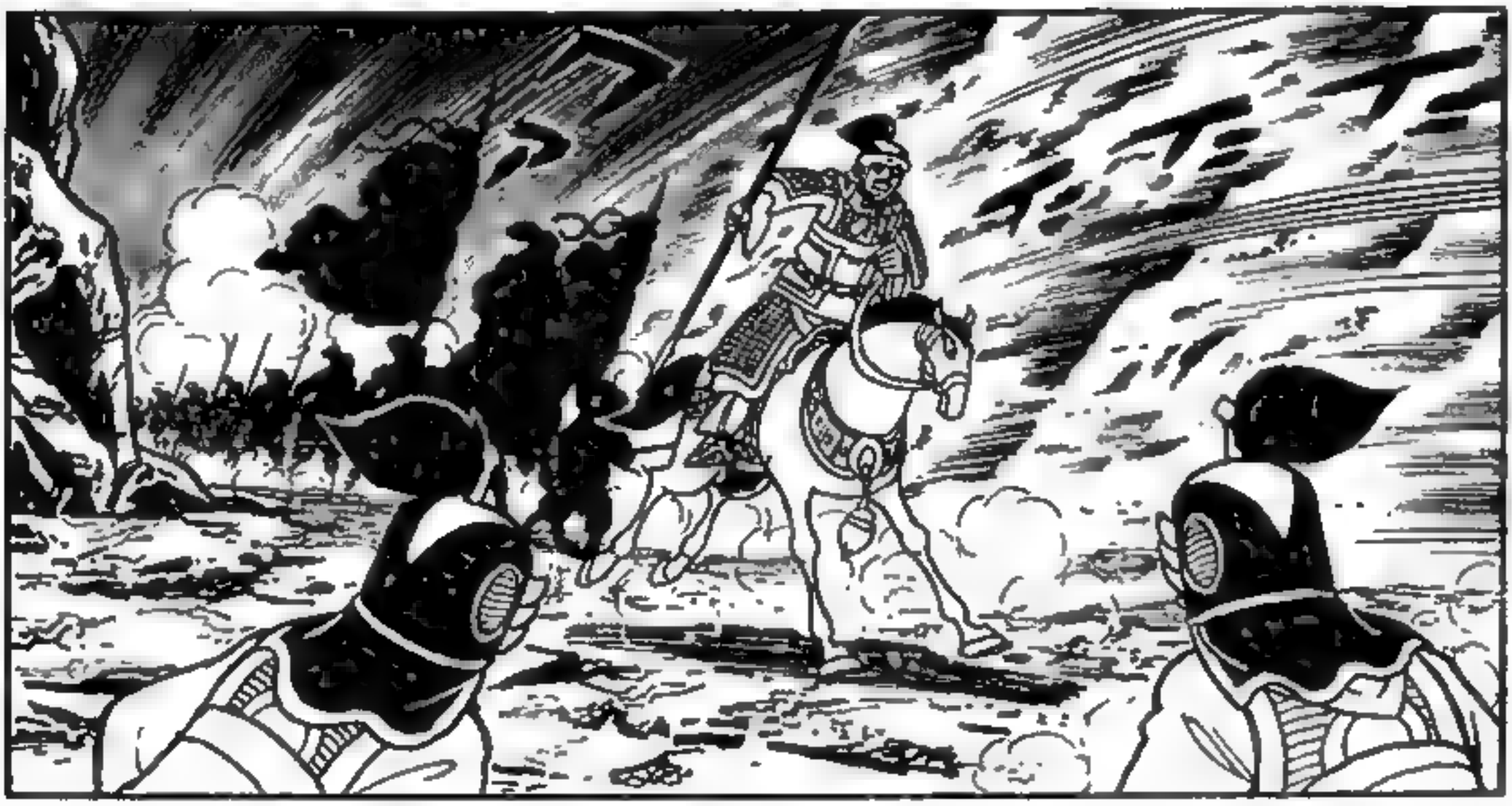
HIDDEN TROOPS HERE AS WELL!?

司馬

司馬

CHARGE!

ATTACK! WE MUST TAKE SIMA YI'S HEAD!



RIGHT, I'LL HANDLE THE SITUATION HERE TO YOU.

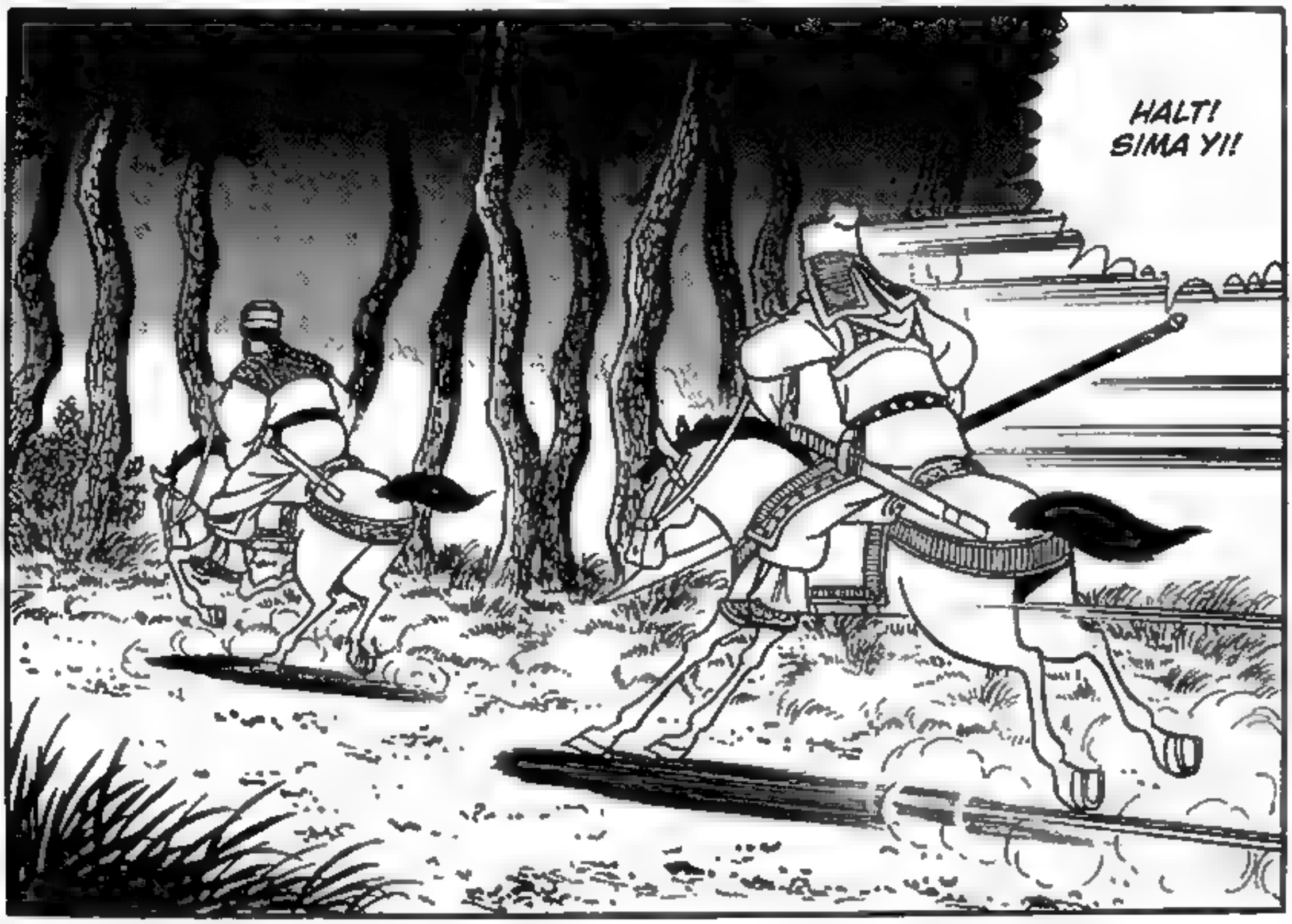
PLEASE WITHDRAW FROM HERE, COMMANDER! WE DO NOT KNOW WHAT OTHER TRAPS THE ENEMIES MIGHT HAVE PREPARED SO IT'S TOO DANGEROUS FOR YOU TO REMAIN HERE!

HOLD IT RIGHT THERE!

AHH! THAT'S SIMA YI!

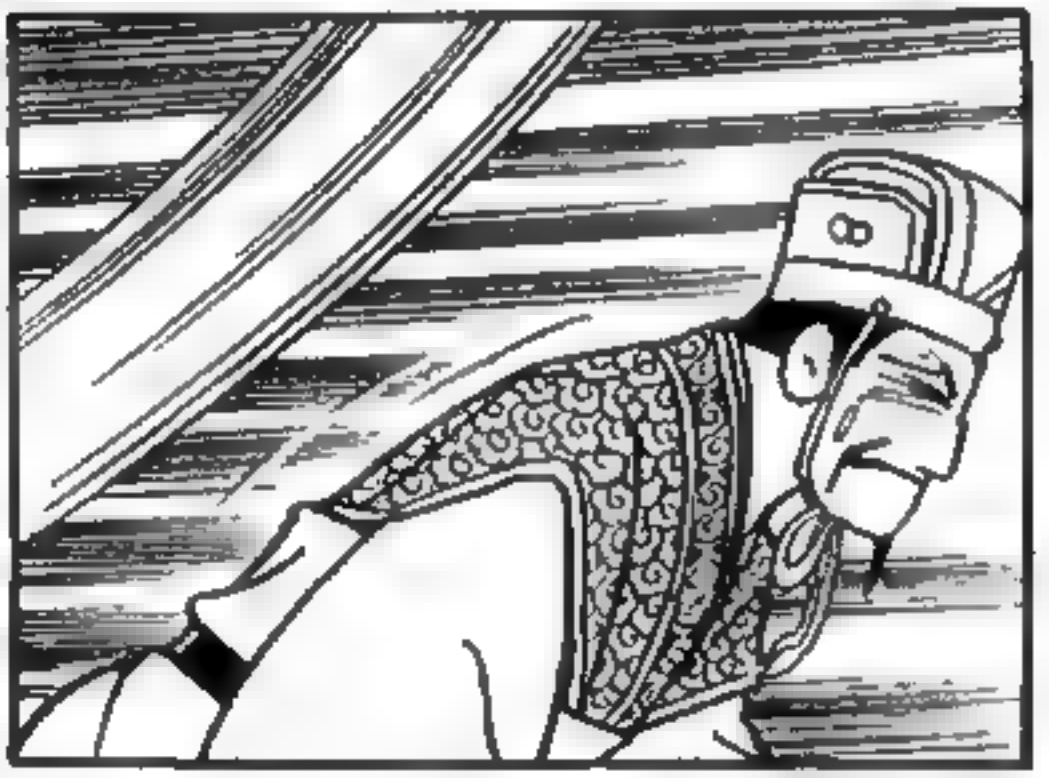
STOP HIM!

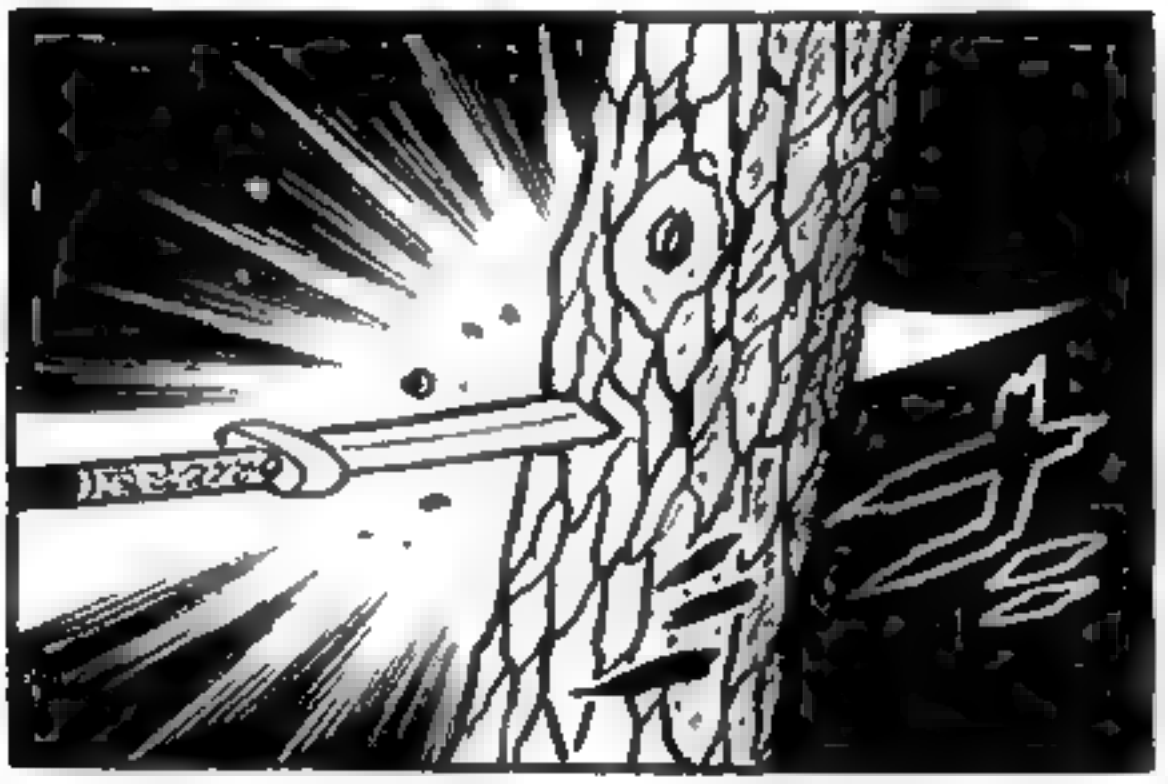
DON'T GET IN MY WAY!

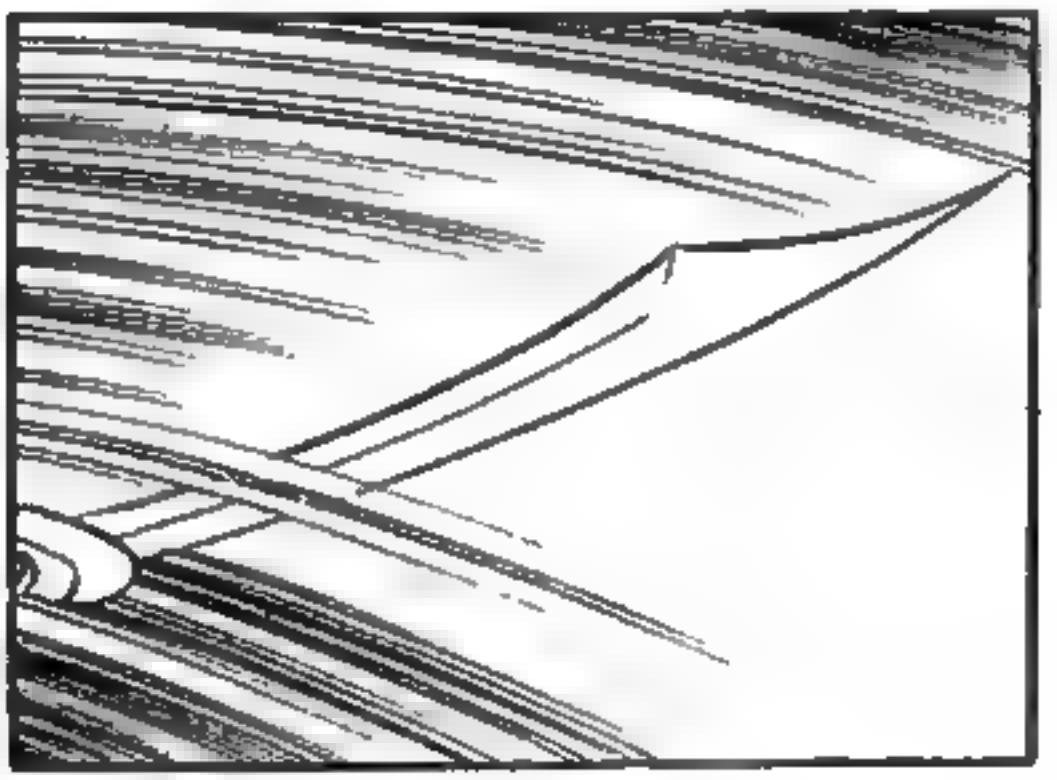

HALT! SIMA YI!

YOUR HEAD IS MINE!

DAMN IT!







NGHH!

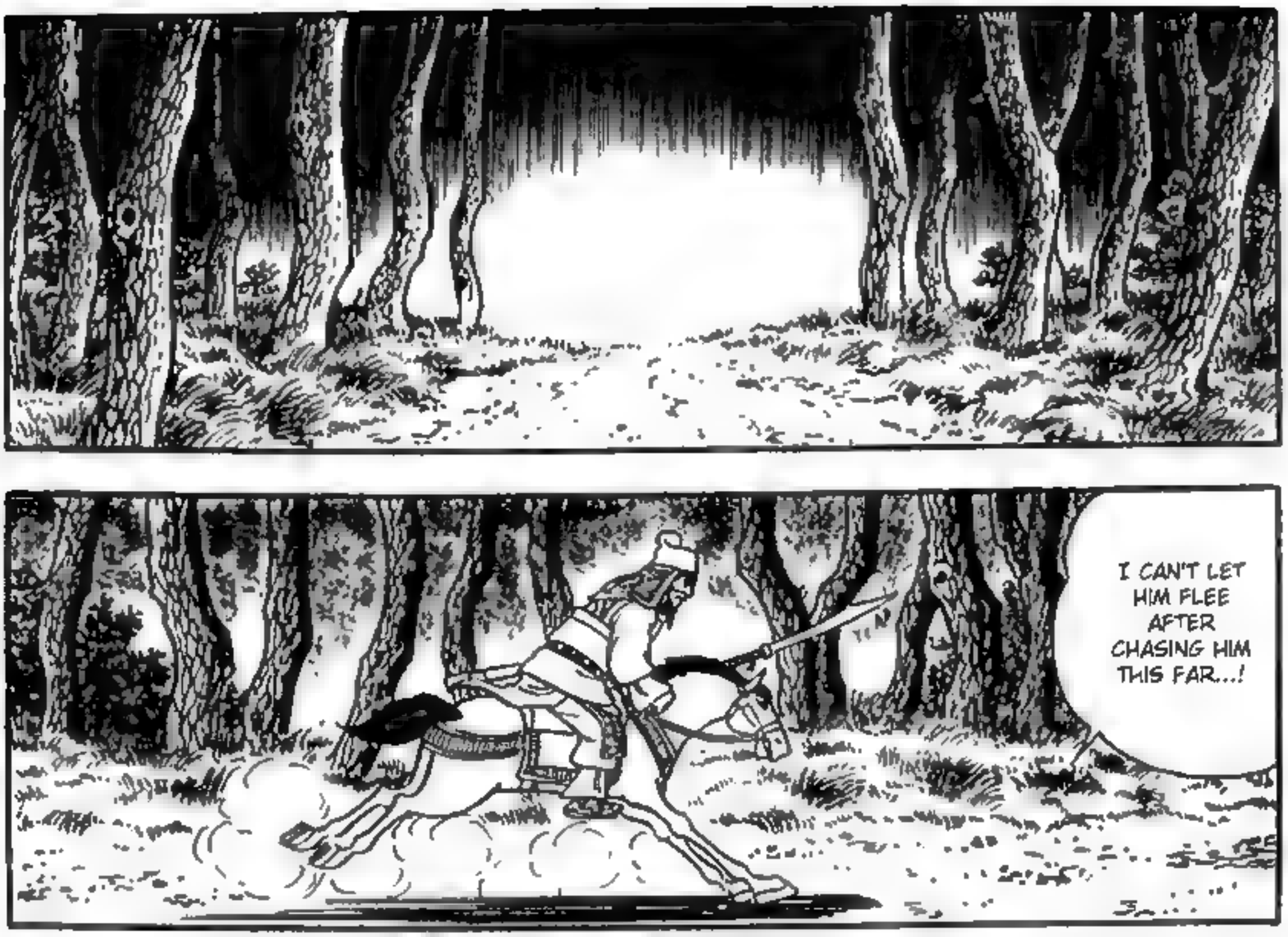
AHH!

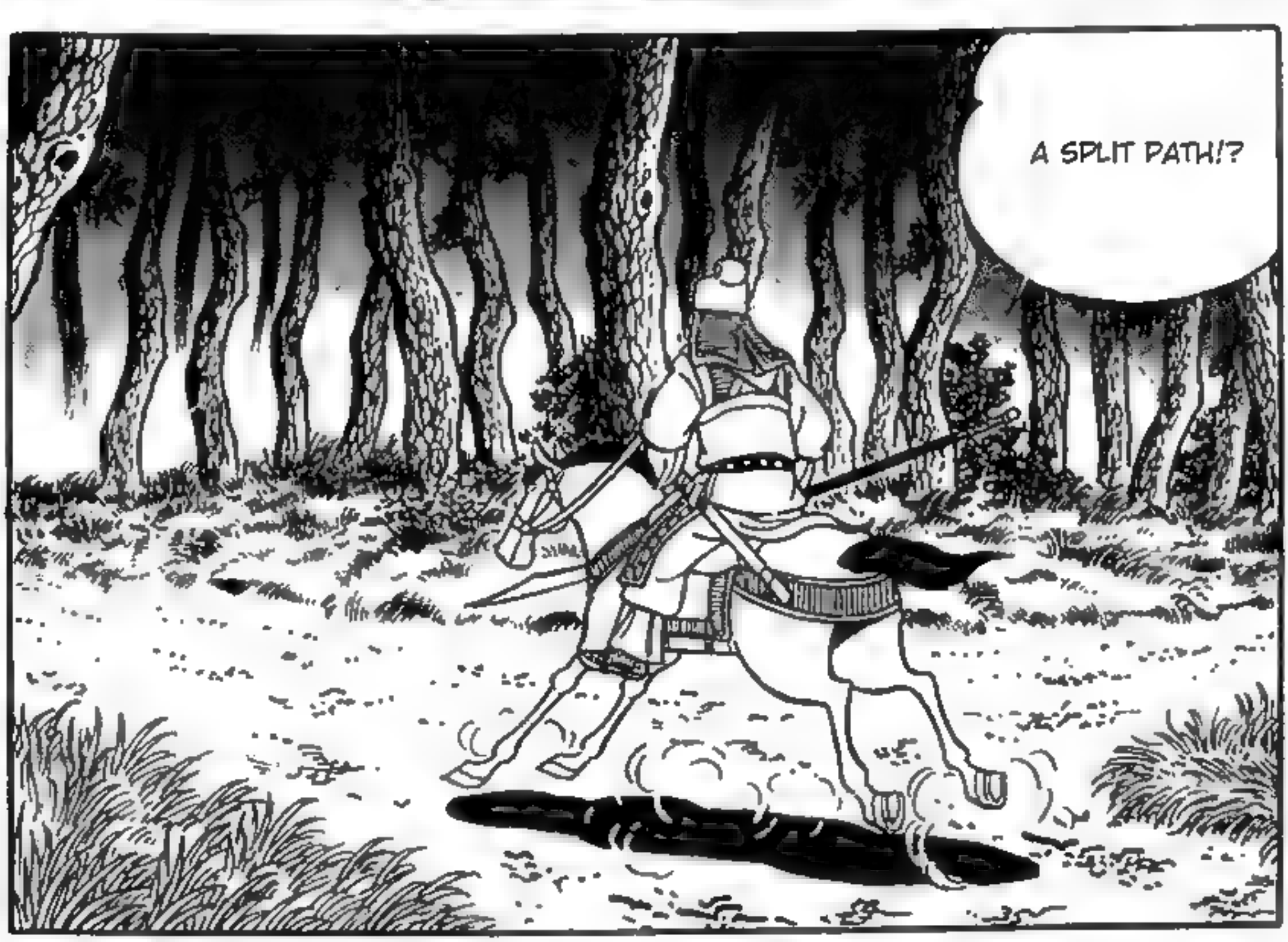
AH!

GREAT.

AFTER TOSSING HIS CAP AT THE ROAD SIMA YI FLED THROUGH THE OTHER PATH

HM!?

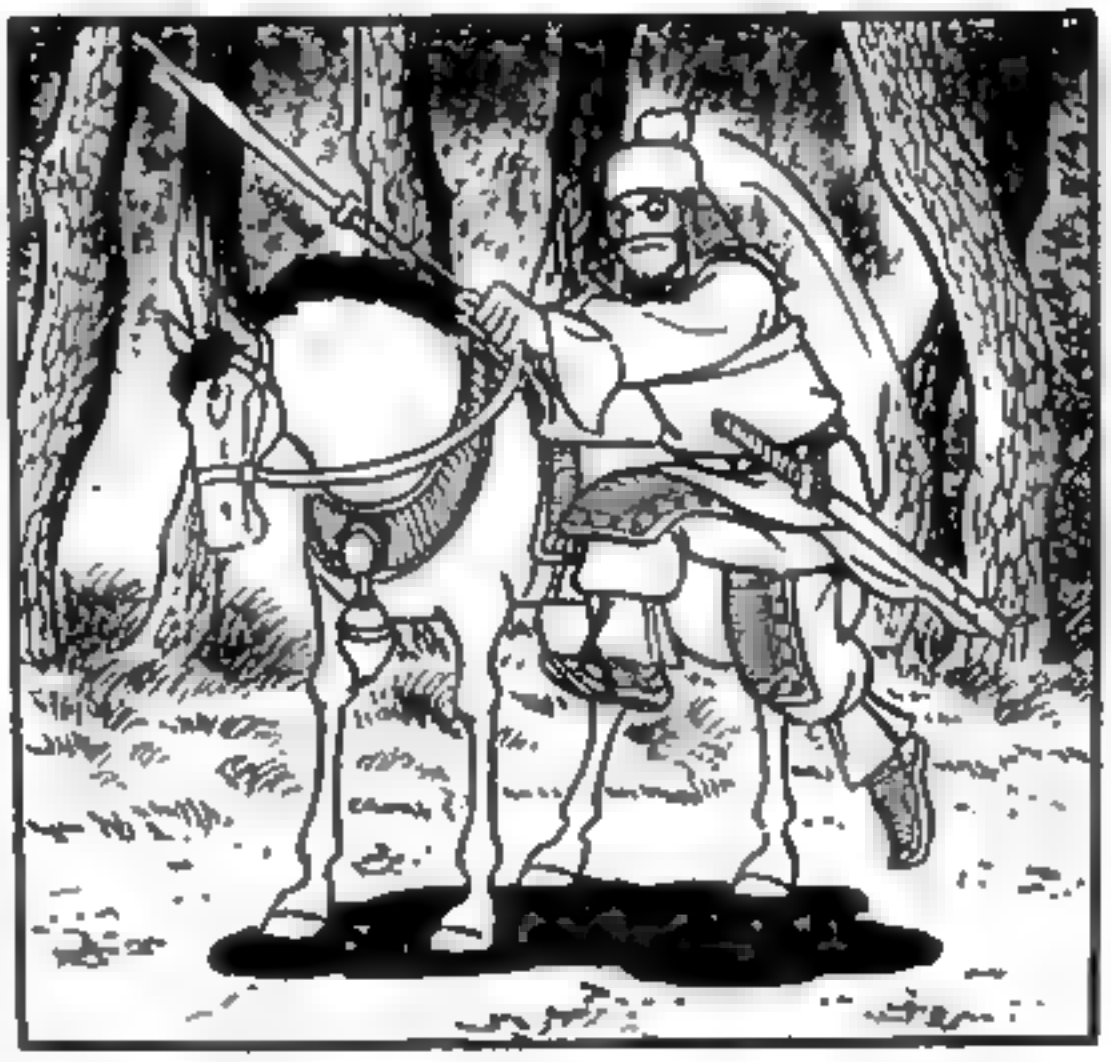

I CAN'T LET HIM FLEE AFTER CHASING HIM THIS FAR...!


A SPLIT PATH!?

AHH!

WHICH WAY DID HE GO?

THIS BELONGS TO SIMA YI!



THEN HE MUST HAVE TAKEN THE EASTERN PATH!

HM?

AH, JIANG WEI! IT'S ME, LIAO HUA!

WHO GOES THERE!? THIS IS JIANG WEI!

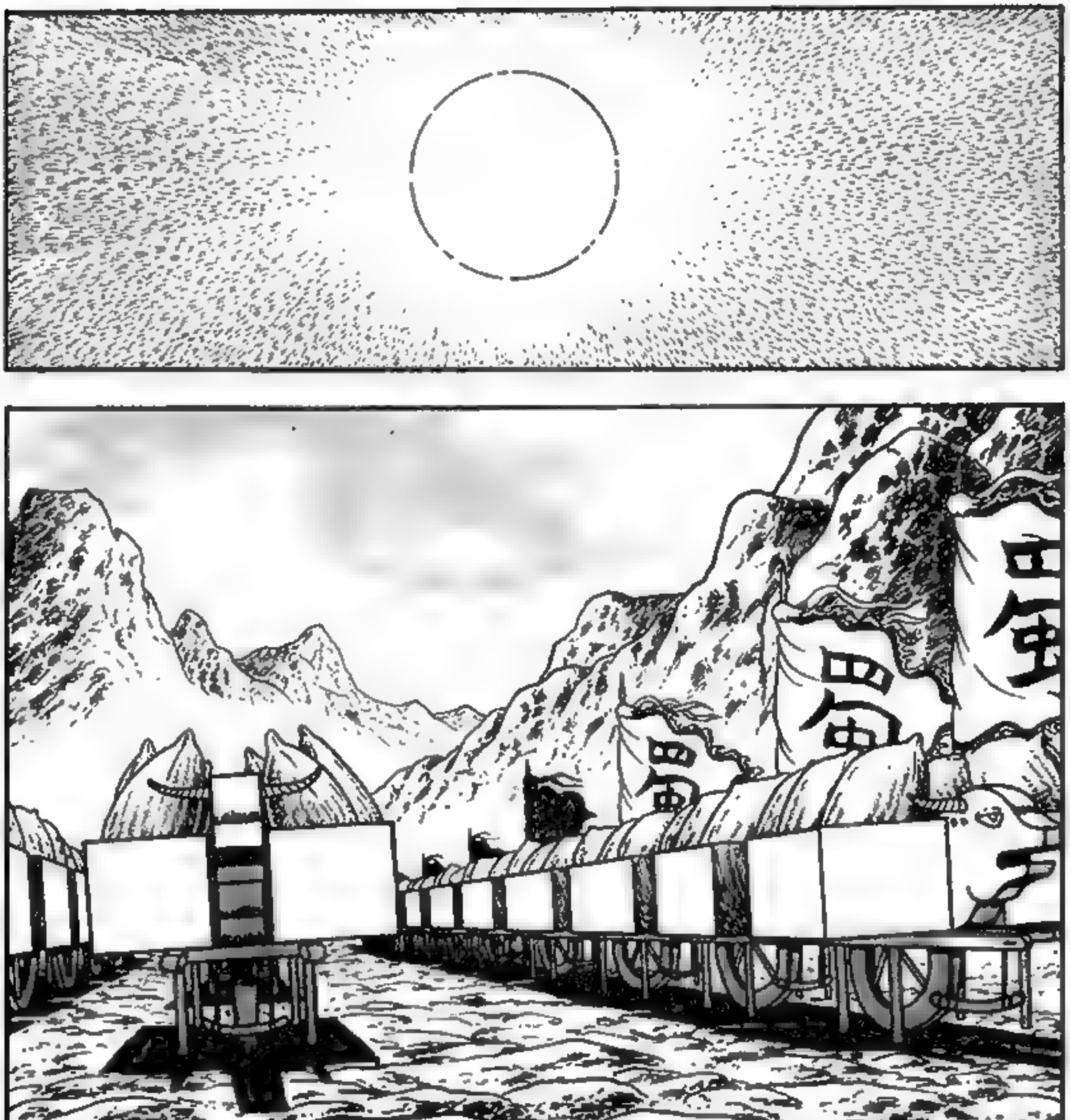
DID SIMA YI COME THROUGH THIS WAY?

WHAT'RE YOU DOING HERE ALONE?

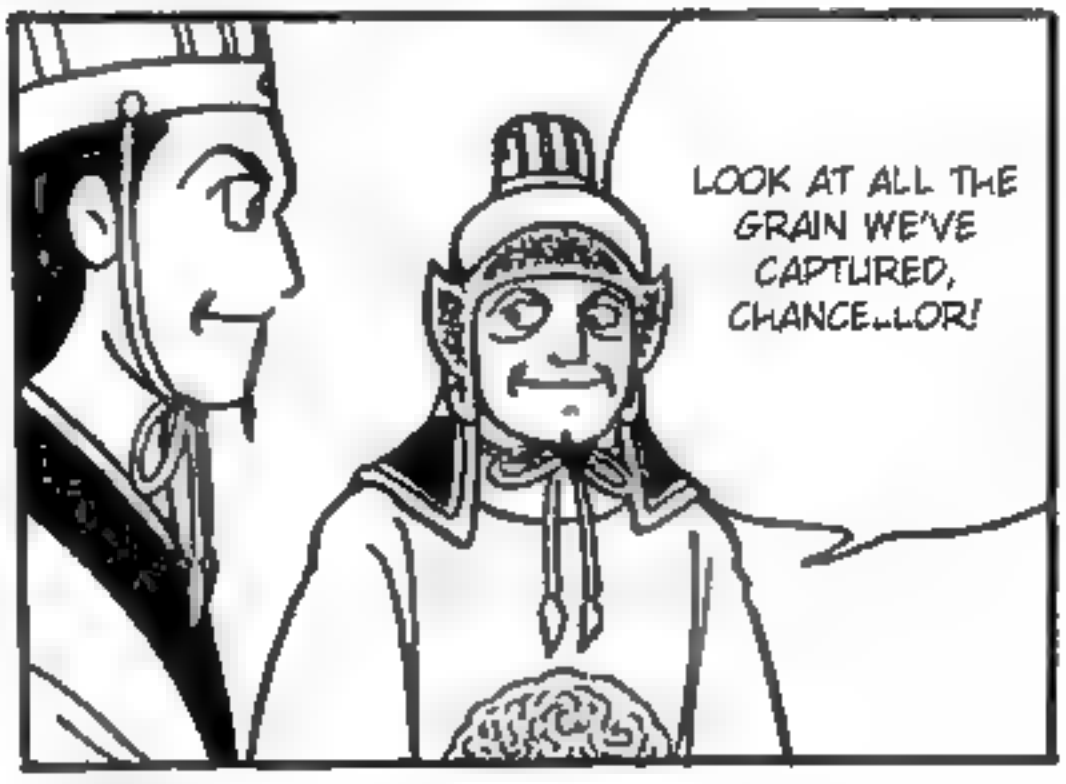
IT'S A SHAME SIMA YI GAVE US THE SLIP.
IN ANY CASE, THE PLAN WAS A SUCCESS. LET'S WITHDRAW FOR NOW.

CURSES, WHERE DID HE RUN OFF TO!?
NO.

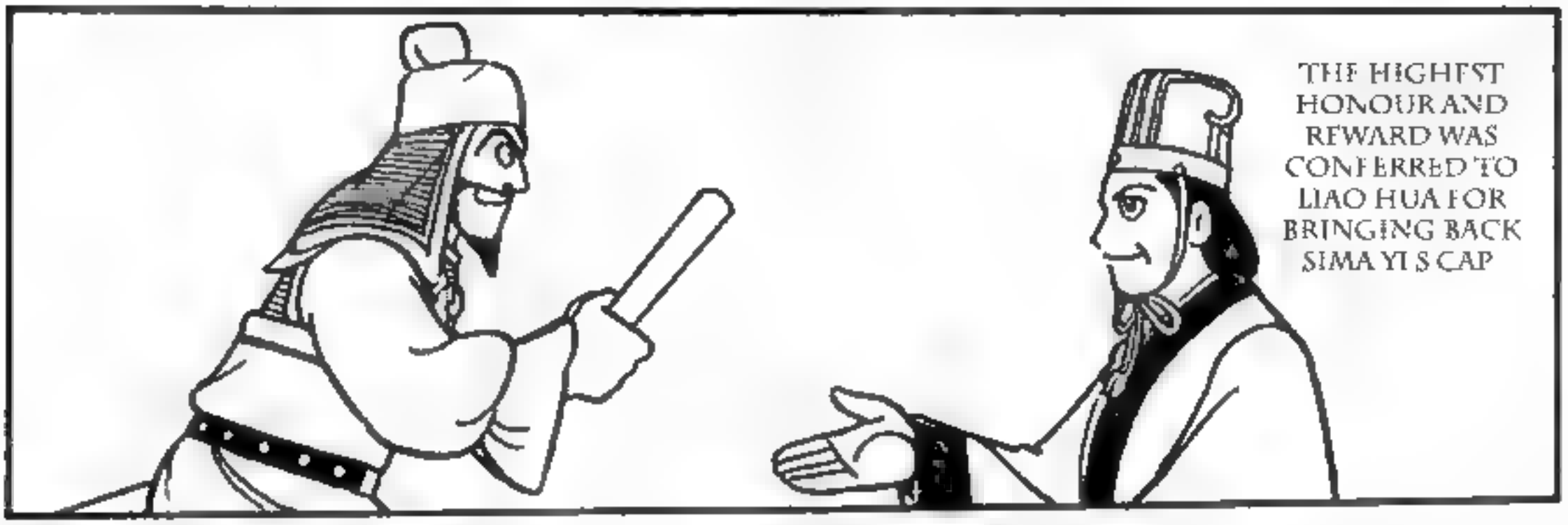
ALTHOUGH THEY HAD FAILED TO KILL SIMA YI, THE PLAN WAS A HUGE SUCCESS WHEN JUDGED ON OTHER CRITERIA



YES.
WE WON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT FOOD TROUBLES FOR A WHILE NOW.


LOOK AT ALL THE GRAIN WE'VE CAPTURED, CHANCE...LOR!

EACH OFFICER WAS DULY REWARDED FOR THEIR CONTRIBU TIONS


THE HIGHEST HONOUR AND REWARD WAS CONFERRED TO LIAO HUA FOR BRINGING BACK SIMA YI S CAP

THE VICTORY MADE UP FOR THE PREVIOUS DEFEAT AND THE TROOPS WERE IN HIGH SPIRITS ONCE MORE
蜀
蜀
蜀

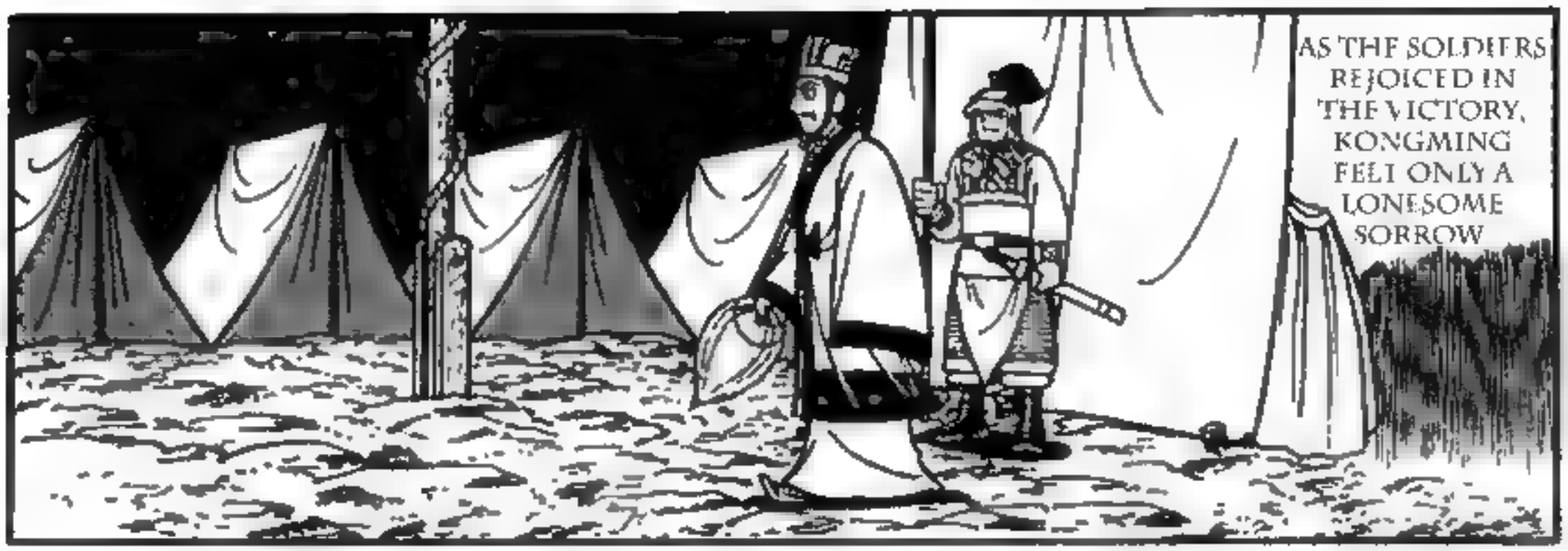
YES, YANG YI?

CHANCELLOR.

WEI YAN IS VOICING COMPLAINTS ABOUT LIAO HUA RECEIVING THE HIGHEST HONOUR WHEN HE LET SIMA YI GET AWAY.

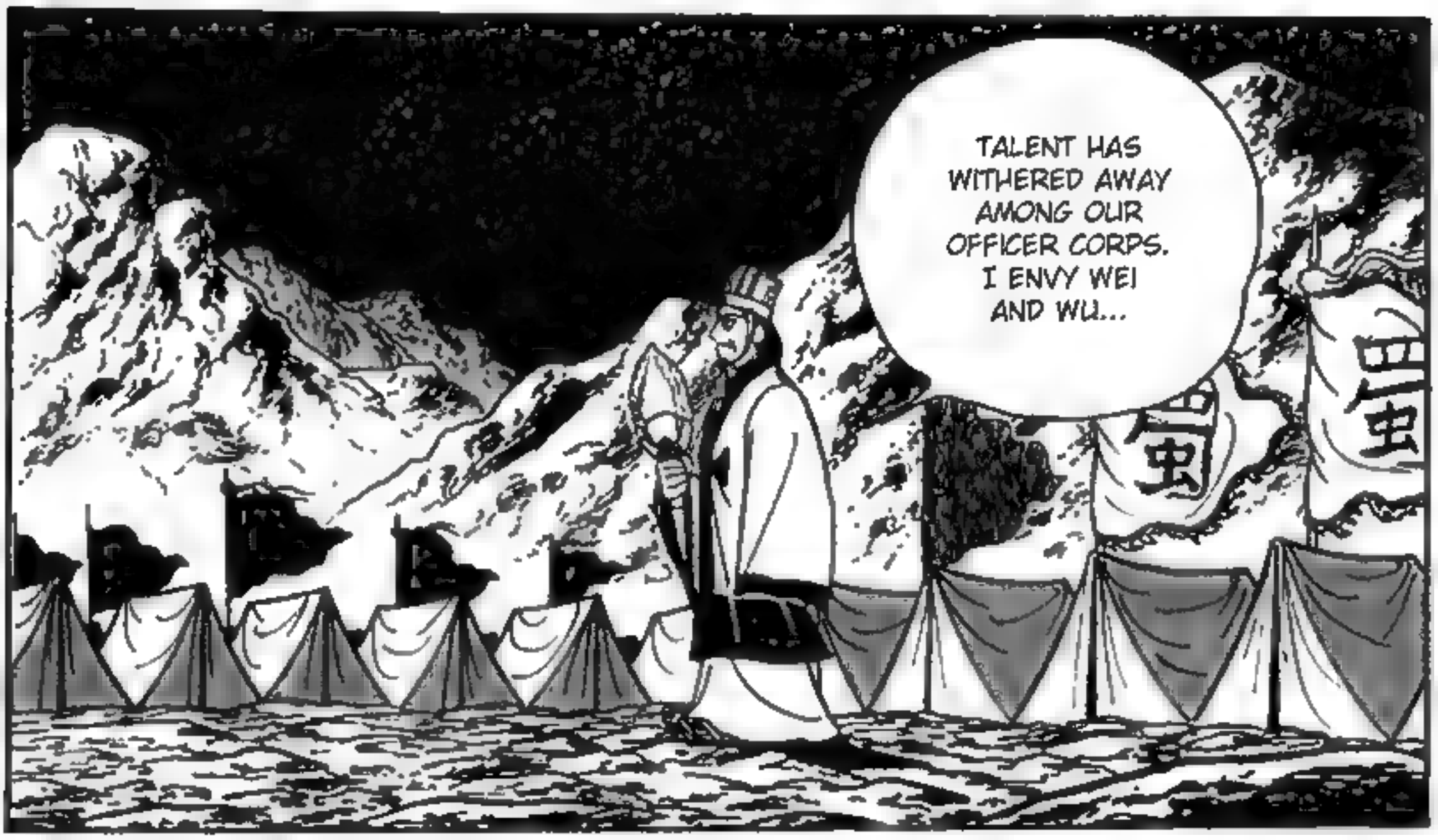
IGNORE IT FOR NOW ..

HIS COMPLAINTS ABOUT YOUR JUDGMENT GROWS LOUDER BY DAY, SIR.


AS THE SOLDIERS REJOICED IN THE VICTORY, KONGMING FELT ONLY A LONESOME SORROW

SURELY, HE WOULD HAVE SEEN THROUGH THE PETTY TRICK AND TAKEN THE OTHER ROAD...
WHAT WOULD GUAN YU HAVE DONE...?

HE RECALLED LIAO HUA'S REPORT THAT HE CHASED AFTER SIMA YI ON THE ROAD WHERE HIS CAP LAY


TALENT HAS WITHERED AWAY AMONG OUR OFFICER CORPS. I ENVY WEI AND WU...

NIGHT ATTACK

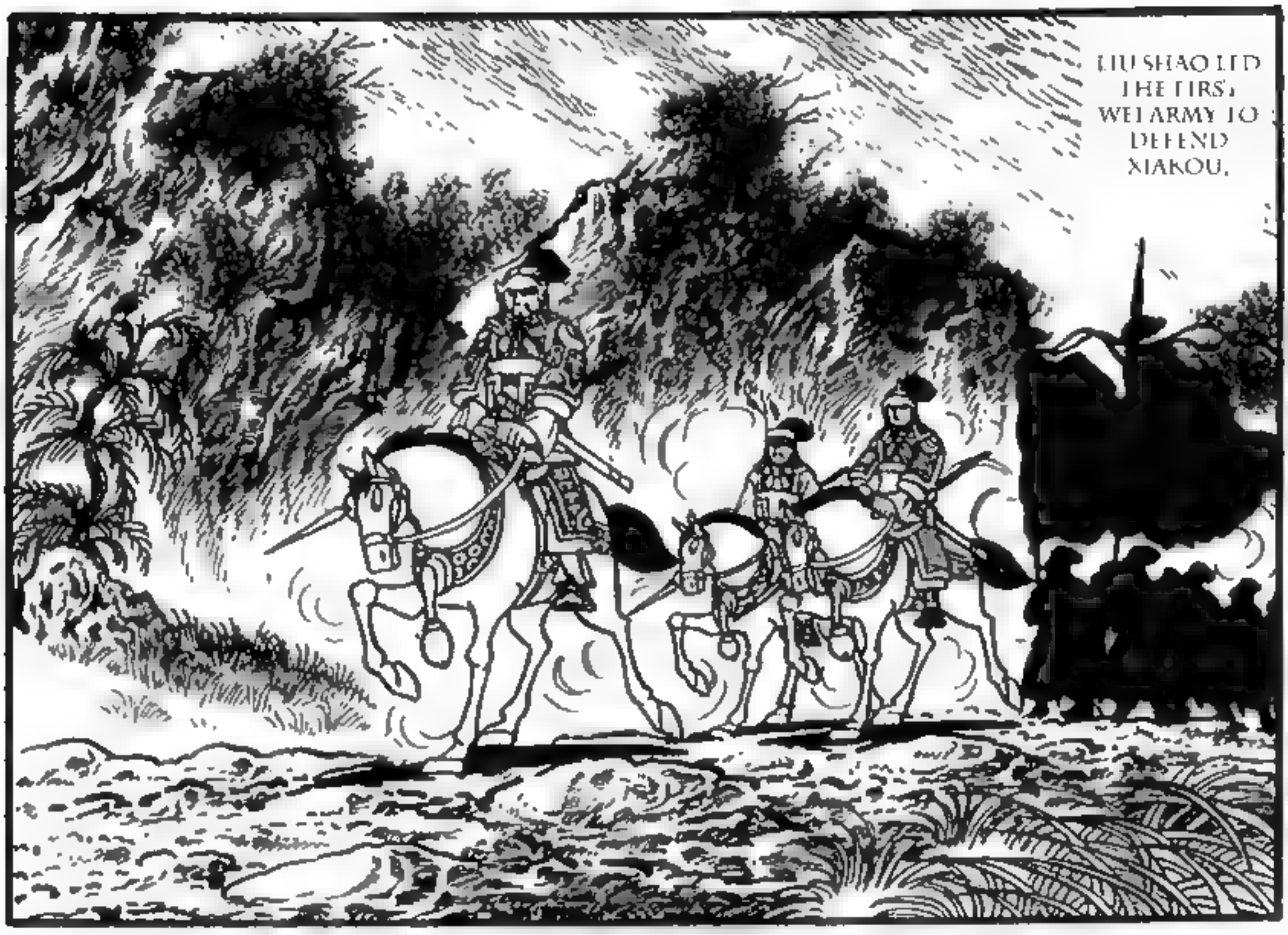
YES!

HE IS TO ONLY DEFEND HIS POSITION AND NOT ENGAGE IN ANY OFFENSIVE MANEUVERS! IF HE WERE TO SLIP UP AND COMPROMISE THE WESTERN FRONT WHILE WE'RE BUSY DEALING WITH WU, OUR WHOLE EMPIRE MAY BE BROUGHT TO ITS KNEES.

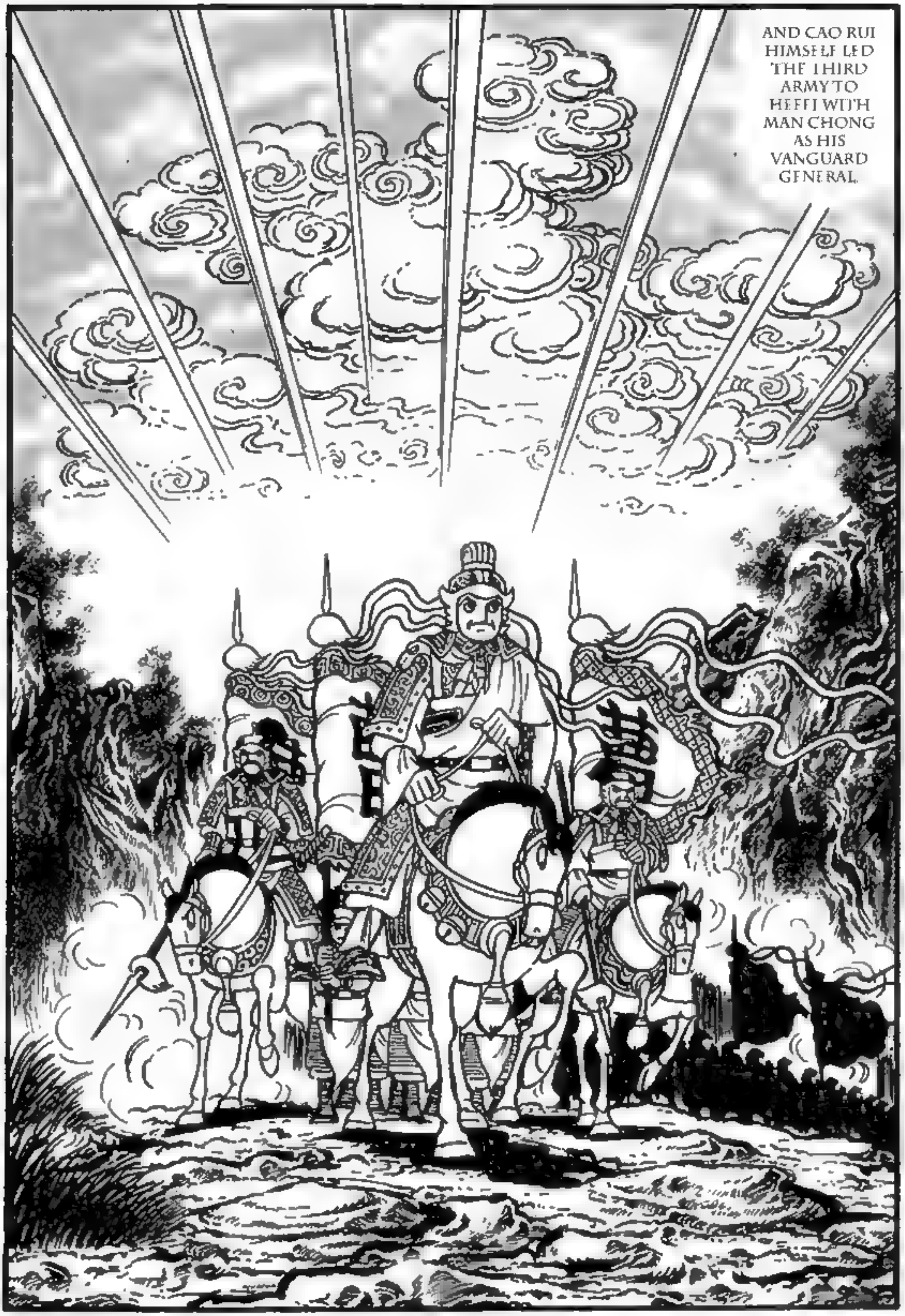
THIS IS A MAJOR CRISIS!

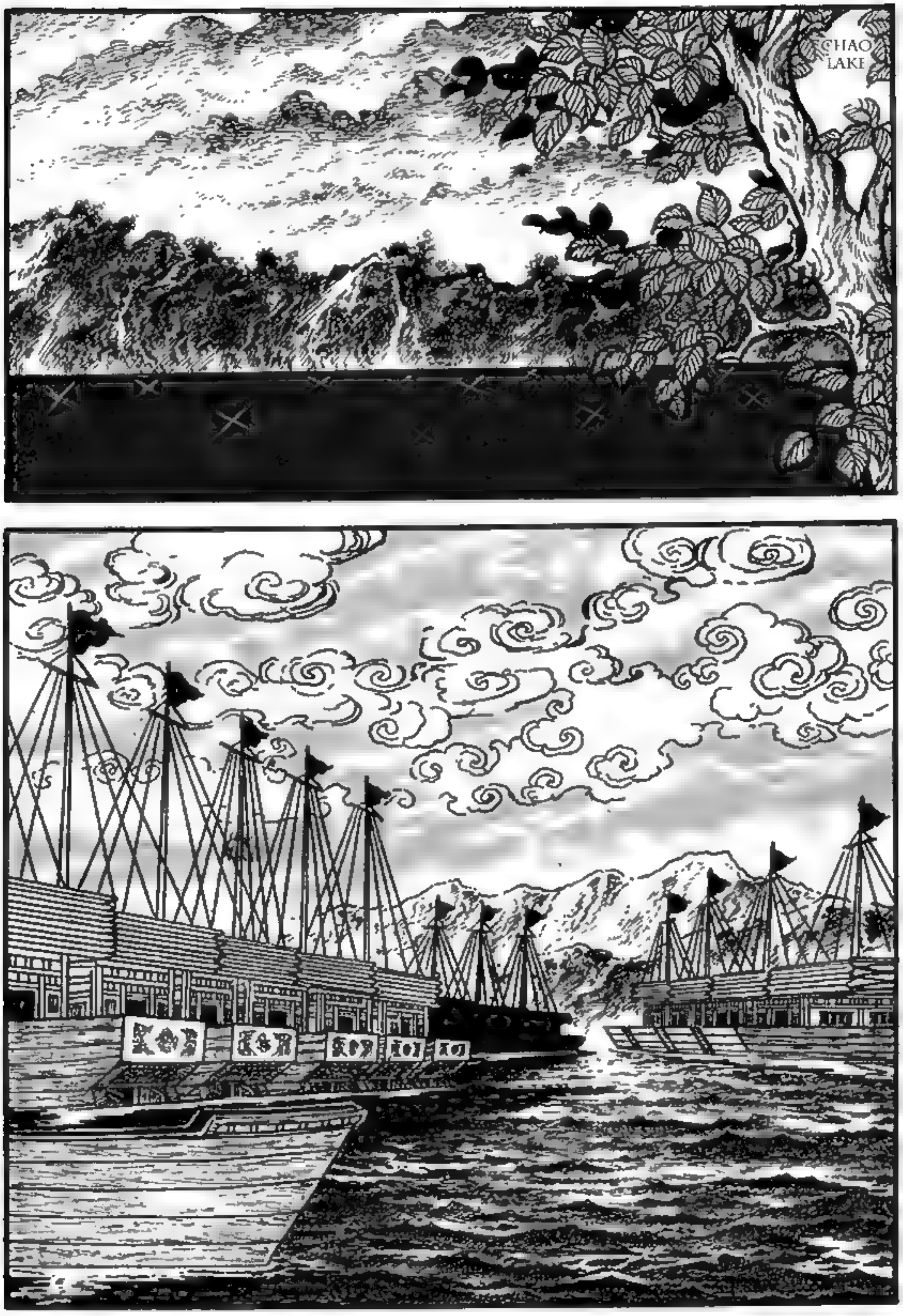
SEND THIS MESSAGE TO SIMA YI AT ONCE!

ALL OF WEI'S MINISTERS OFFERED CAO RUI WITH ADVICE ON HOW TO HANDLE THE GRAVE CRISIS FACING WEI


LIU SHAO LED THE FIRST WEI ARMY TO DEFEND XIAKOU.

TIAN YU LED THE SECOND ARMY TO DEFEND XIANG YANG.


AND CAO RUI HIMSELF LED THE THIRD ARMY TO HEFEI WITH MAN CHONG AS HIS VANGUARD GENERAL.


CHAO
LAKE

AN IMPRESSIVE SIGHT, INDEED. IT SEEMS WHILE WE WERE BUSY FOCUSING ON SHU, WE LET WU GROW TOO STRONG UNCHECKED.

HM...
GENERAL MAN CHONG, THAT'S THE WU NAVY UP AHEAD.

IN ANY CASE, LET'S REPORT BACK TO THE EMPEROR. OUR VANGUARD FORCES ALONE DO NOT HAVE THE NUMBERS TO TAKE ON ALL OF THEM.

魏

YES, AND THEY DO NOT LOOK LIKE A FORCE THAT CAN BE EASILY DEFEATED.

THE ENEMY FLEET IS DOCKED AT CHAO LAKE, YOU SAY?

JUDGING BY THEIR NUMBERS, WE SHOULD NOT MOVE LIGHTLY...

YES, I CAN TELL BY THE GRIM LOOK ON YOUR FACE.

WU MAY HAVE BUILT UP ITS NUMBERS WHILE WE WERE BUSY BATTLING SHU, BUT I DOUBT THEY HAVE MANY TROOPS WITH ACTUAL COMBAT EXPERIENCE DUE TO ALL THEIR YEARS OF PEACE.

YES, BUT...

HAHA, IT'S FINE. DON'T YOU KNOW THAT BATTLES ARE NOT WON WITH NUMBERS ALONE?

TONIGHT!?

PREPARE THE TROOPS FOR A SURPRISE ATTACK TONIGHT.

THE ENEMIES THINK WE WILL NOT ATTACK UNTIL TOMORROW, FOR WE'VE ONLY JUST ARRIVED WITH WEARY TROOPS. THUS, THE LAST THING THEY WILL EXPECT IS FOR US TO BRING THE FIGHT TO THEM TONIGHT!

YES?

ZHANG QIU.

YES, SIR.
TAKE 5000 TROOPS TO THE LAKE'S MOUTH AND START A FIRE.
YES, YOUR MAJESTY.
TONIGHT, WE WILL ATTACK THE WU WITH THE FIRE THEY'RE SO FOND OF USING IN WAR.
MAN CHONG, YOU WILL ATTACK THE EASTERN BANK OF THE LAKE AND ALSO SET FIRE TO THEIR CAMPS.

THAT NIGHT ZHANG QIU,
AND MAN CHONG'S TROOPS CREPT TOWARDS THE WU CAMPS
JUST AS CAO RUI PREDICTED, THE WU CAMPS HAD LET THEIR GUARD DOWN ON THAT NIGHT

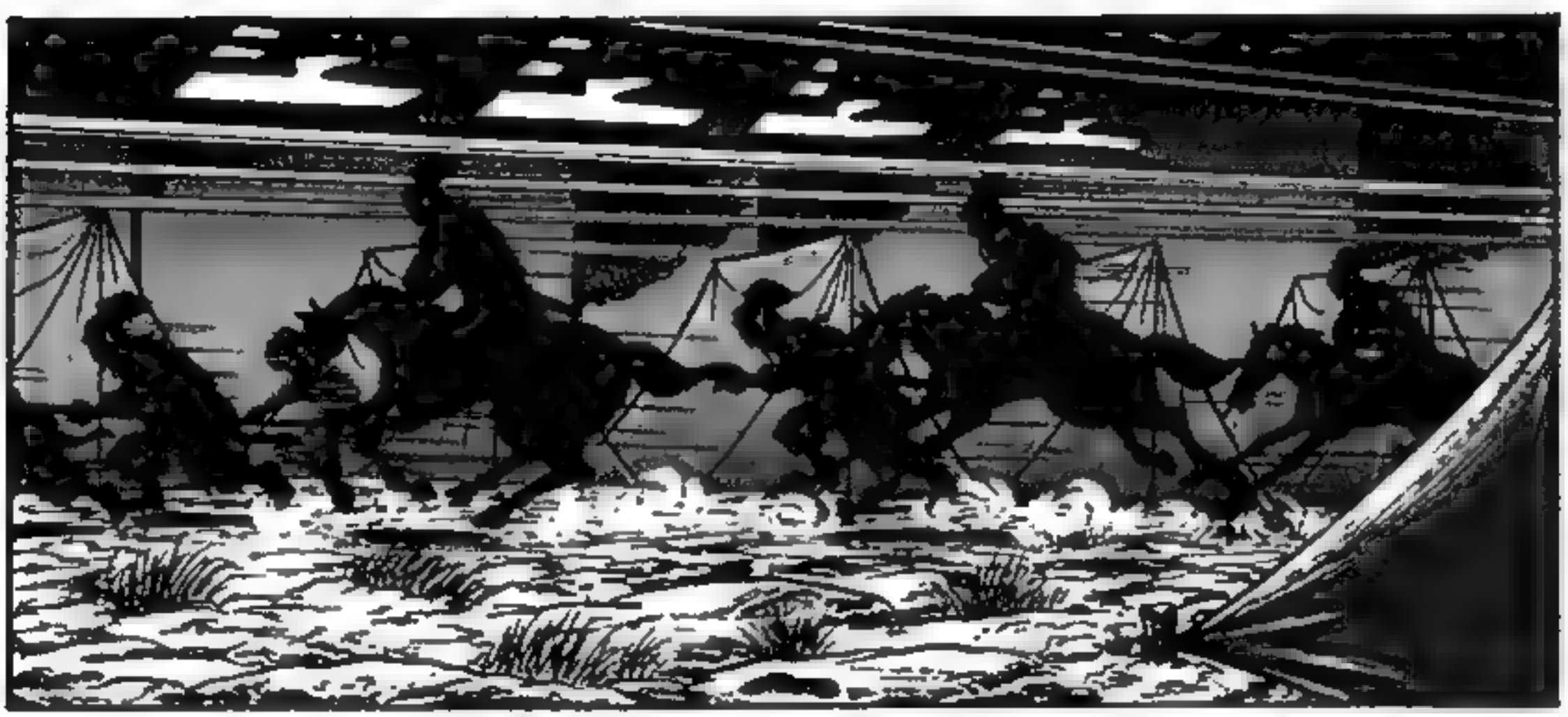
SET FIRE TO EVERYTHING YOU SEE!

IT'S JUST AS OUR EMPEROR PREDICTED!

WITH A THUNDEROUS ROAR, THE WEI TROOPS STORMED THE WU CAMPS.

W-WHA!?

HUH?



UGH!

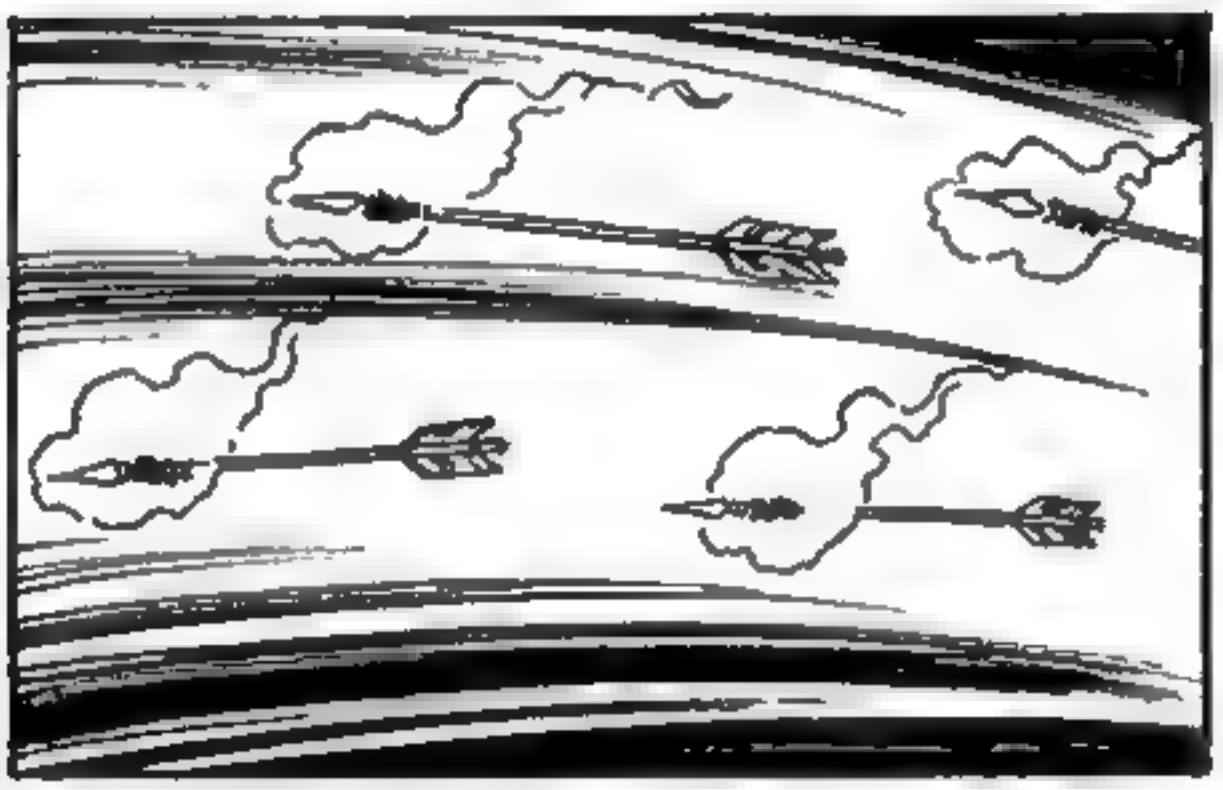
AGHH!

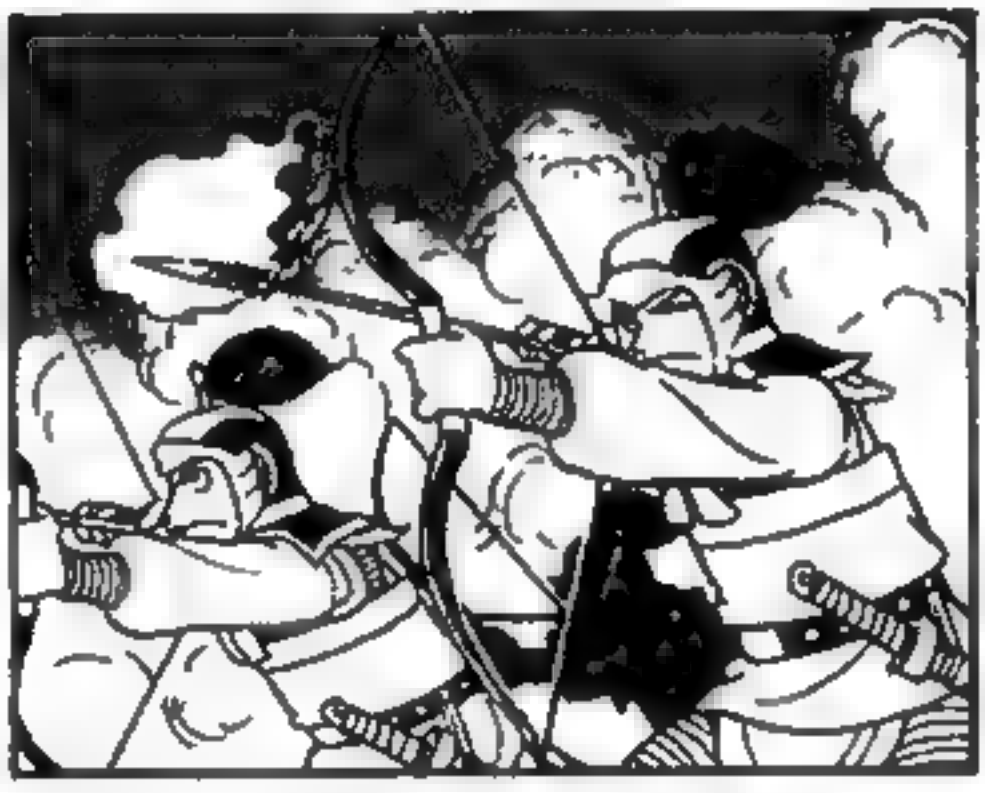
AHH!

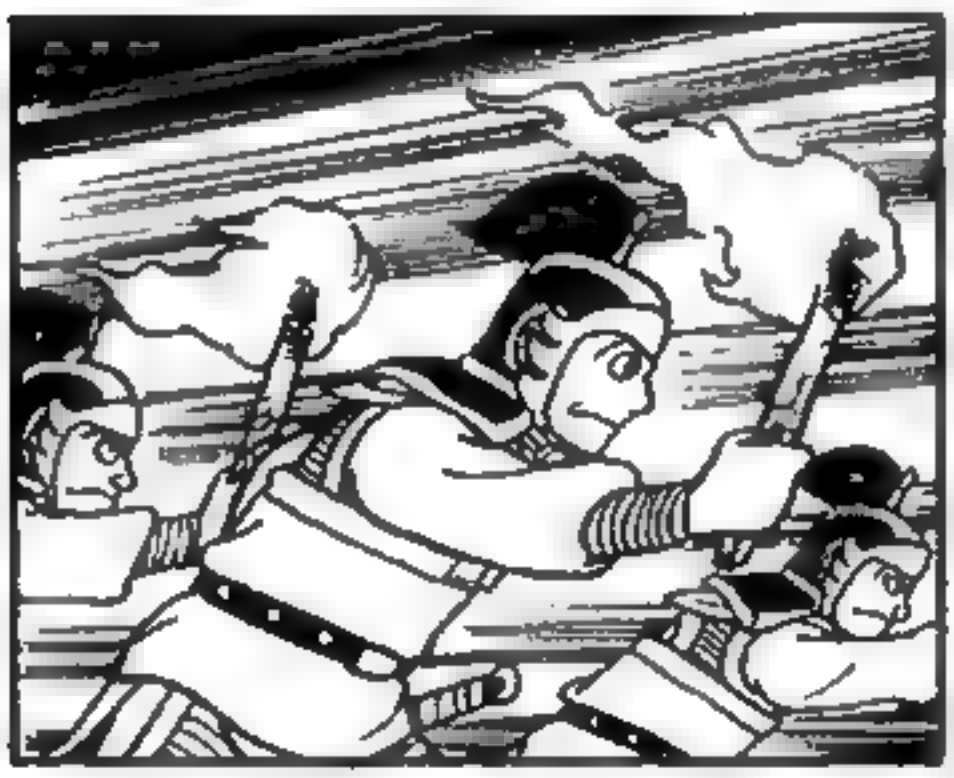
ENEMY
RAID!

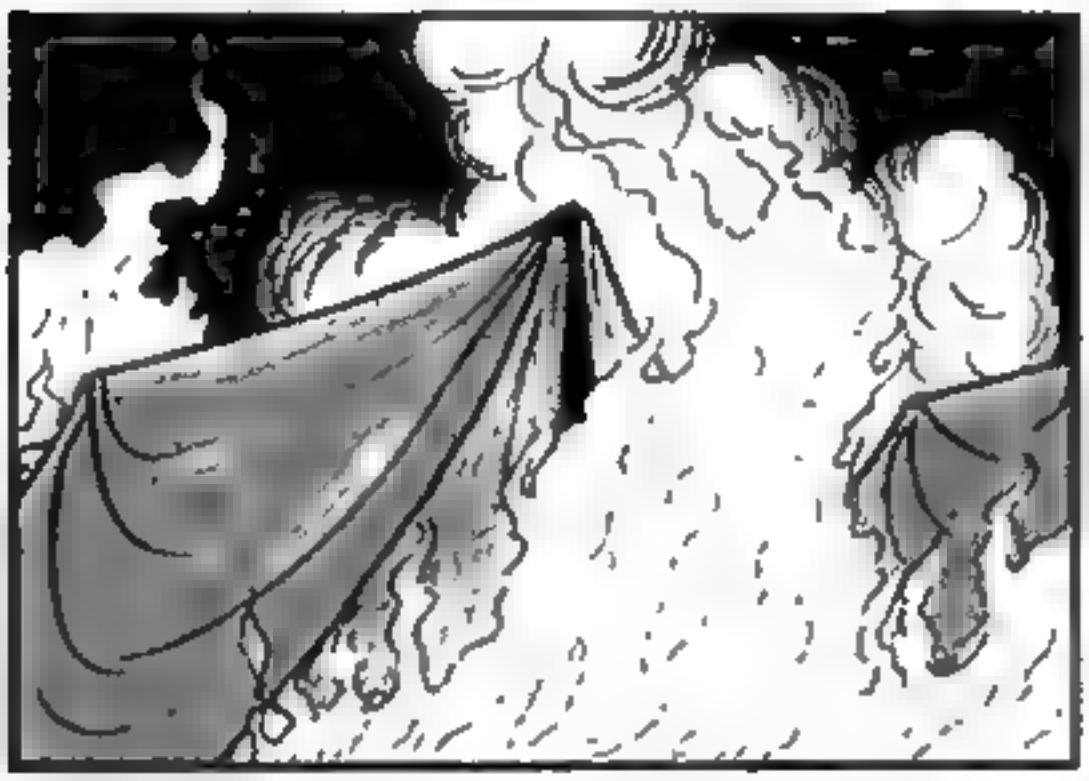
RAZE IT ALL DOWN!

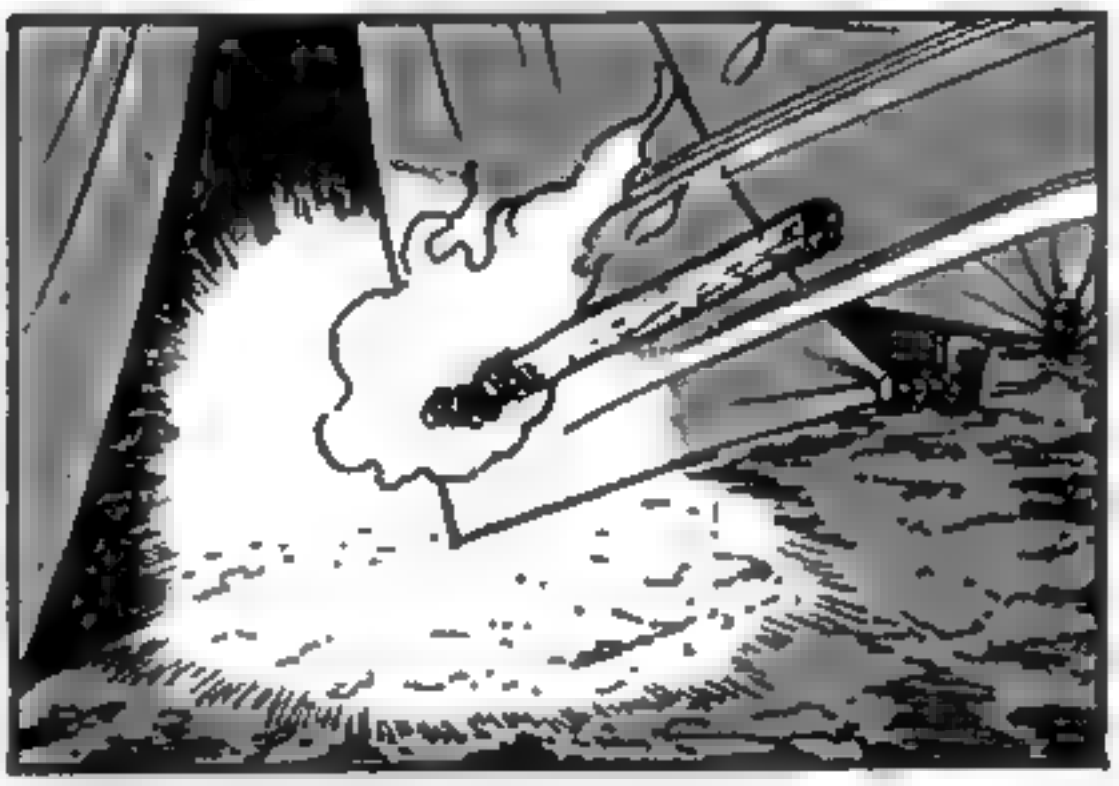
TOSS THE TORCHES!

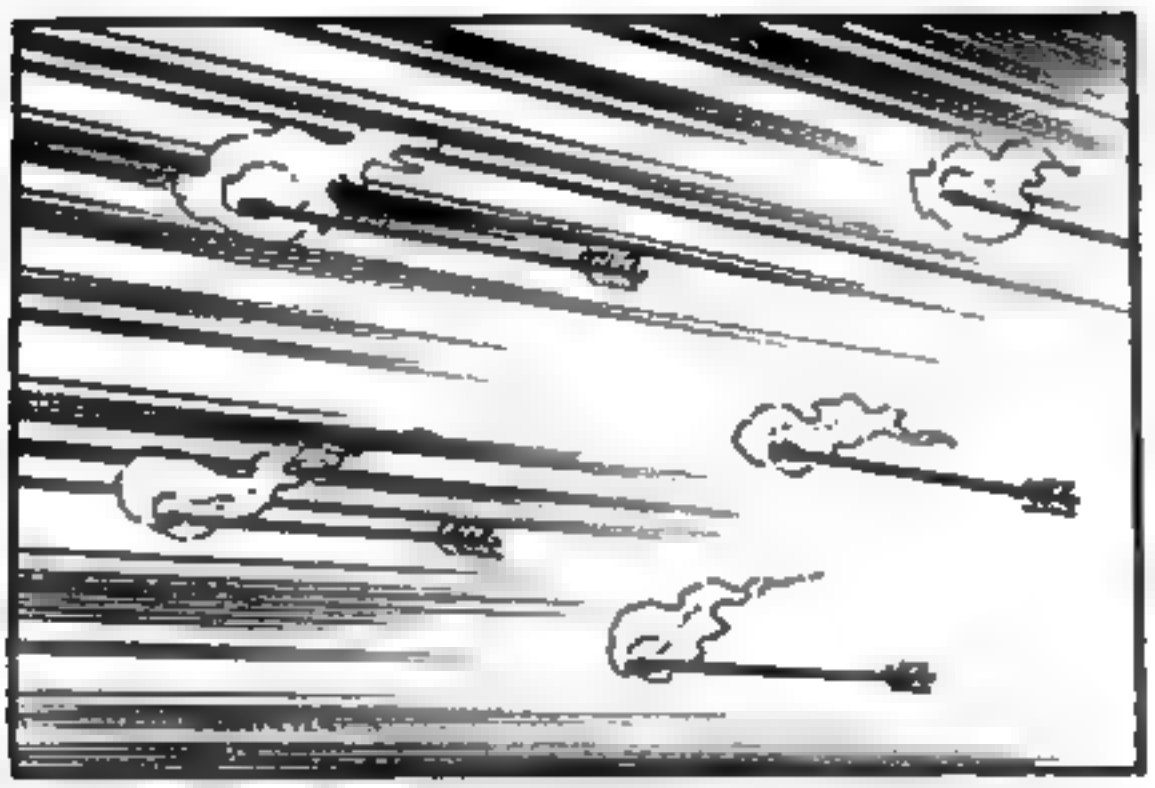


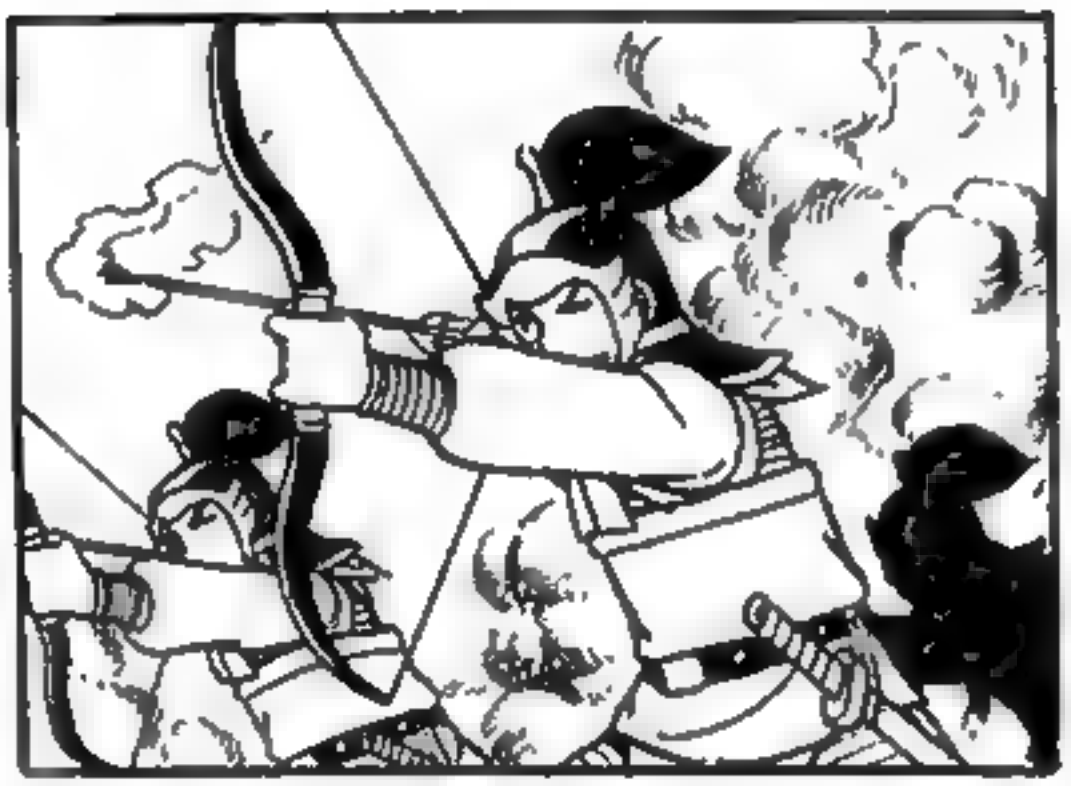


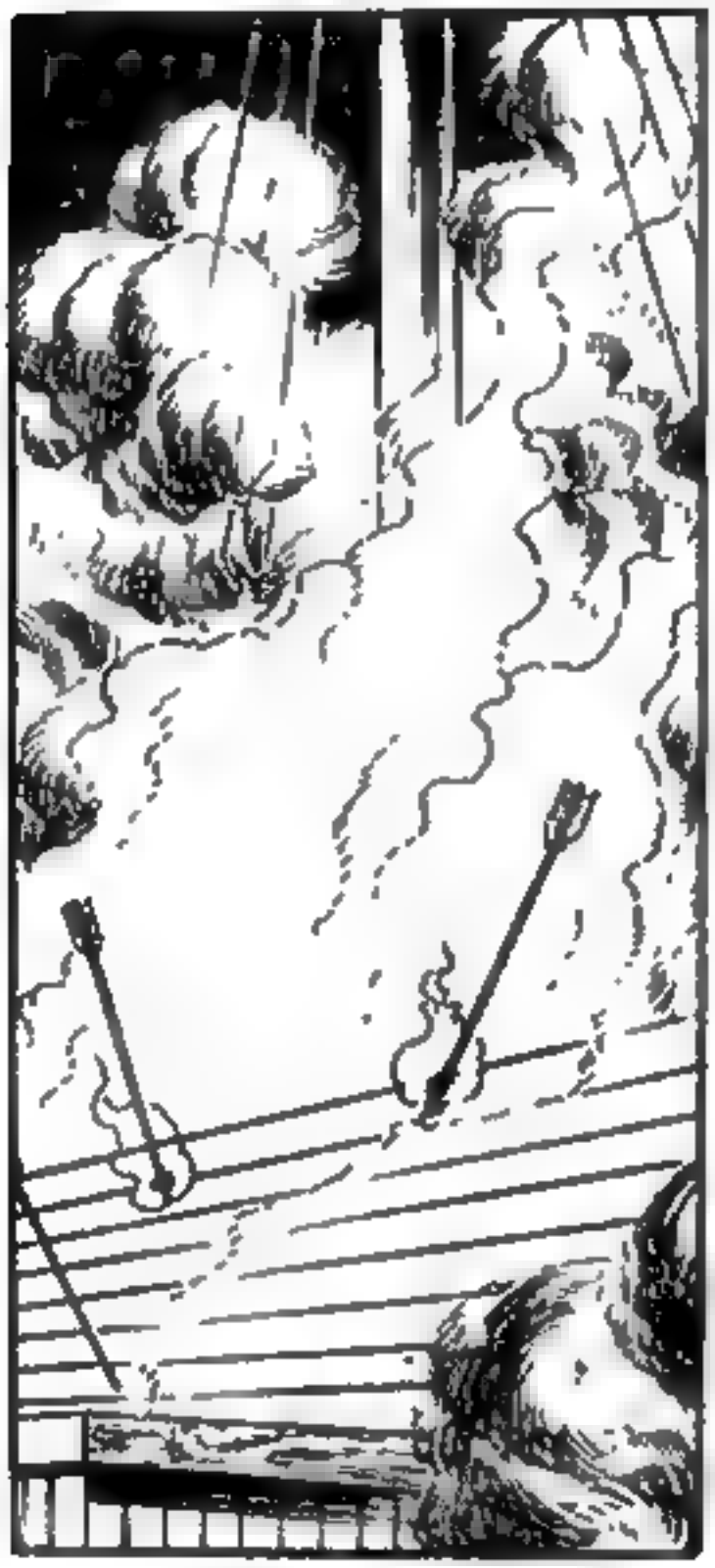




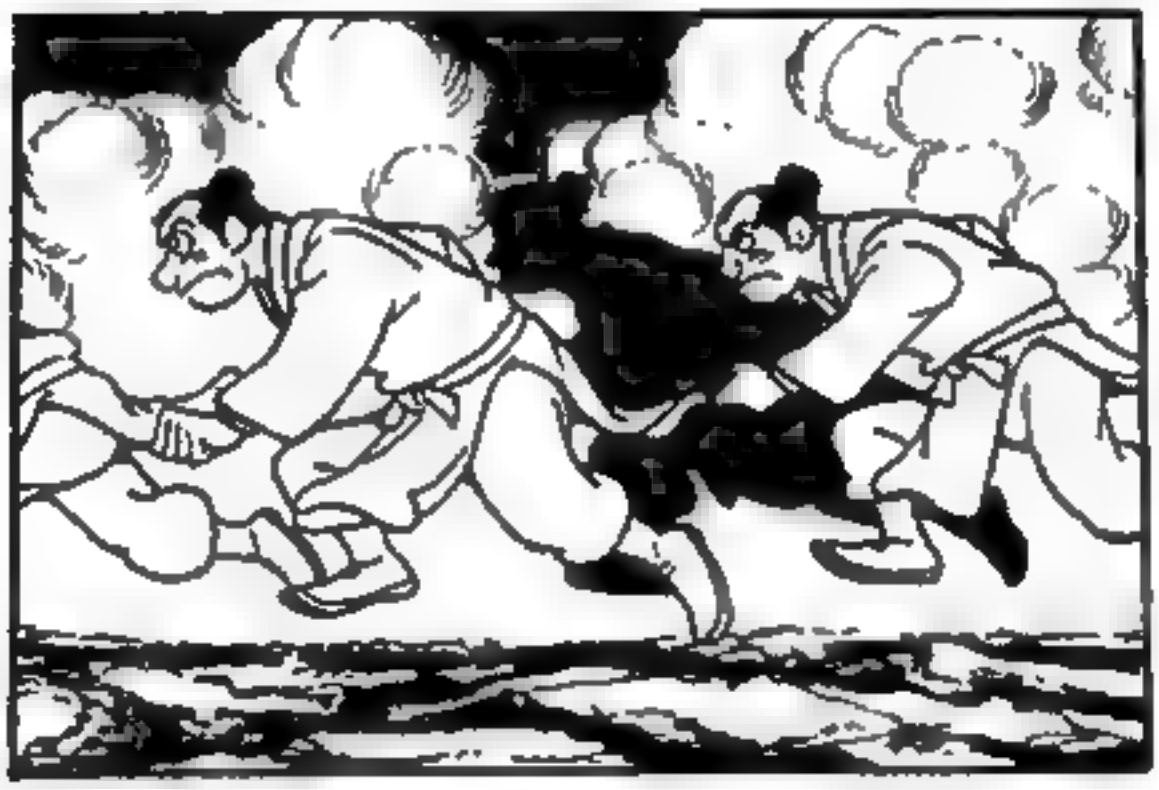




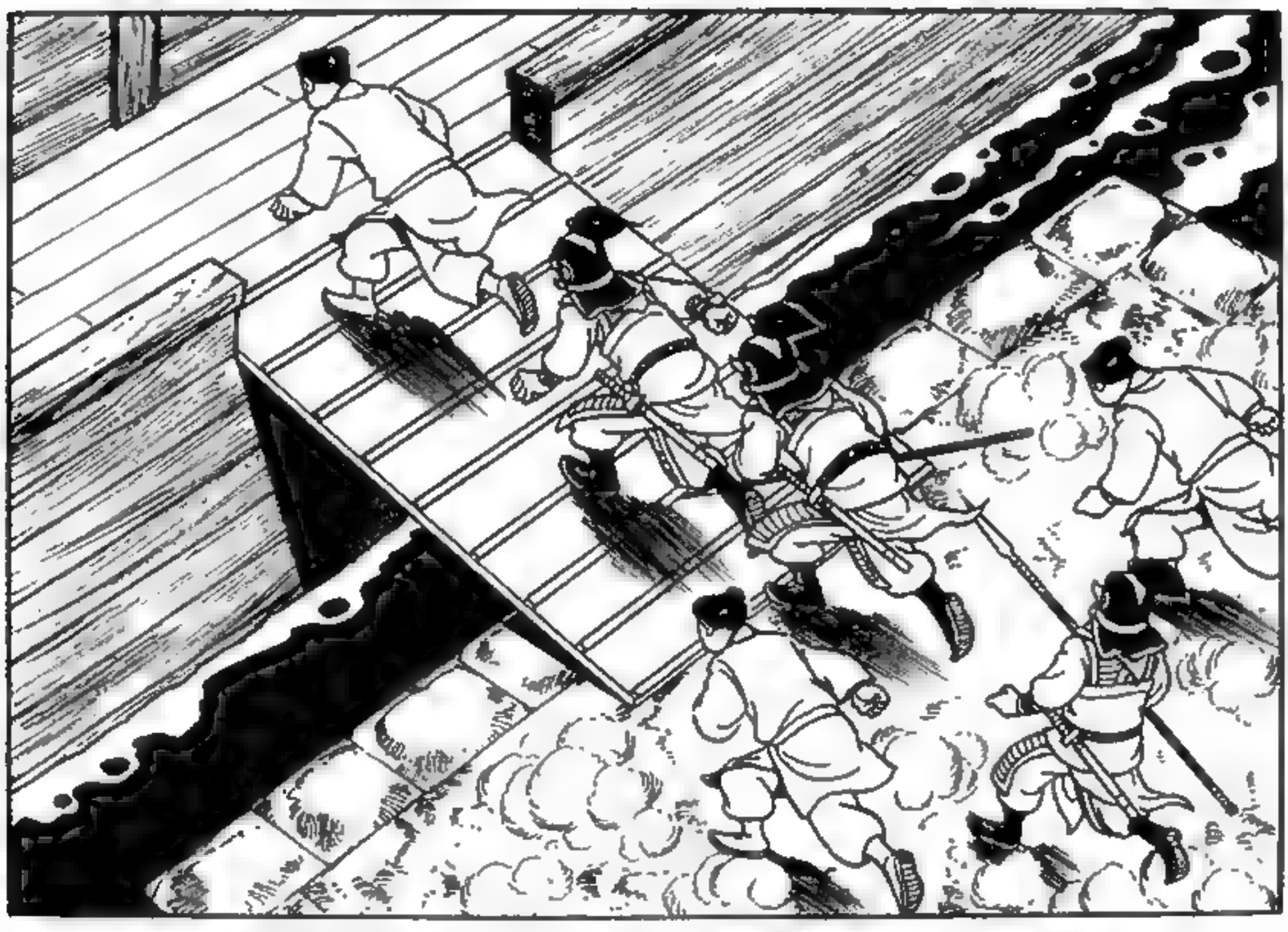




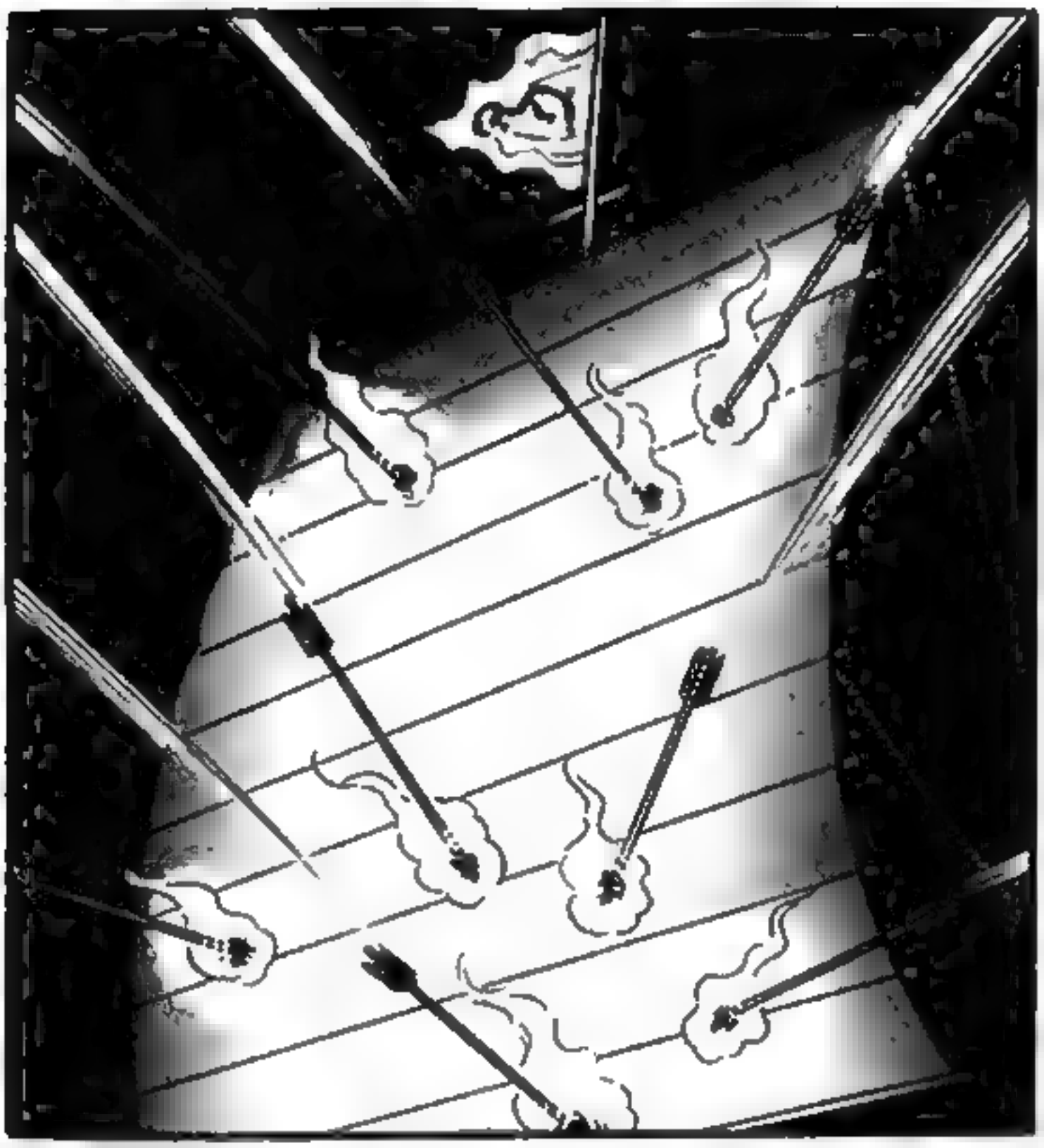
OH NO! THE FIRE WILL SPREAD TO THE SHIPS!

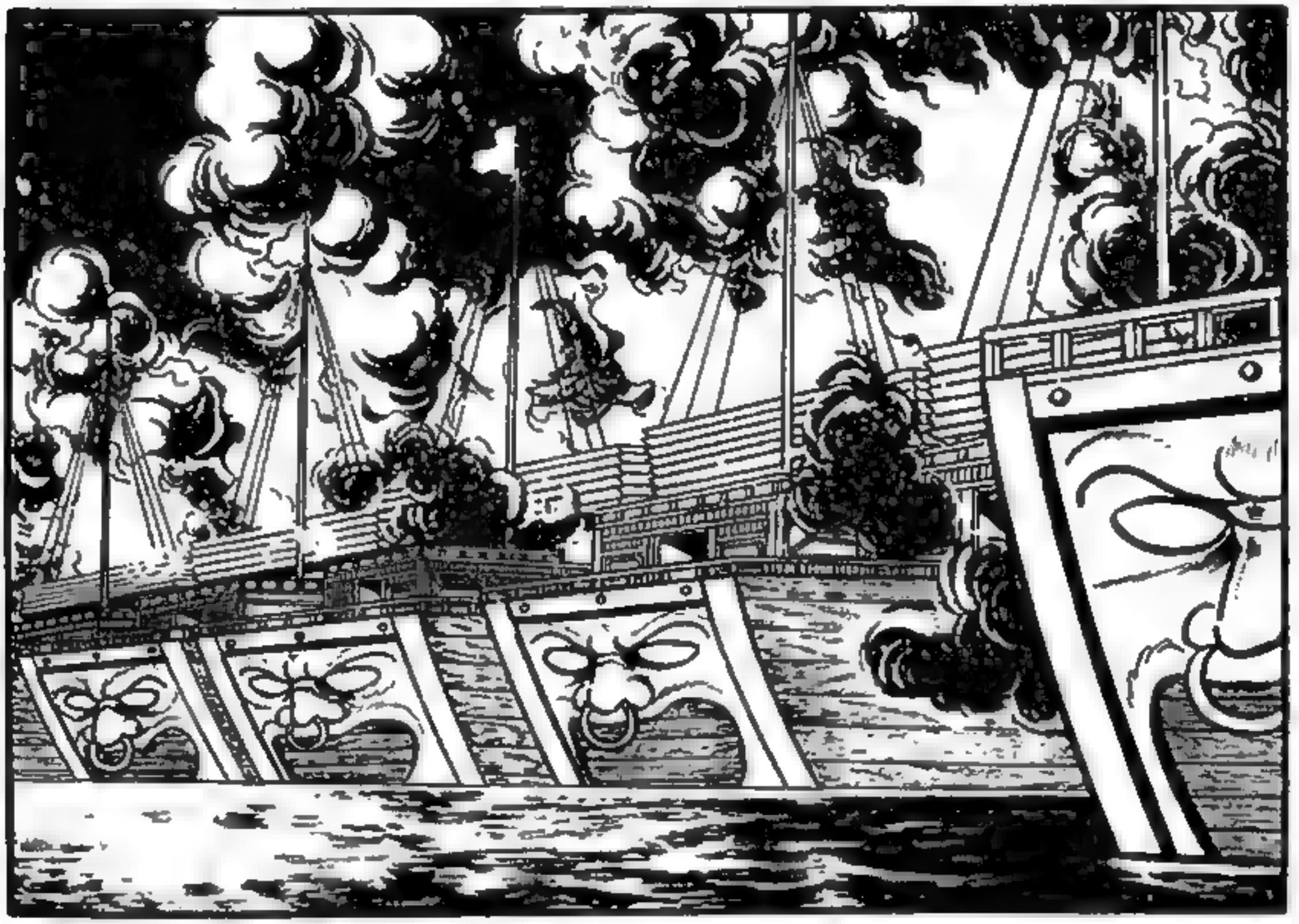


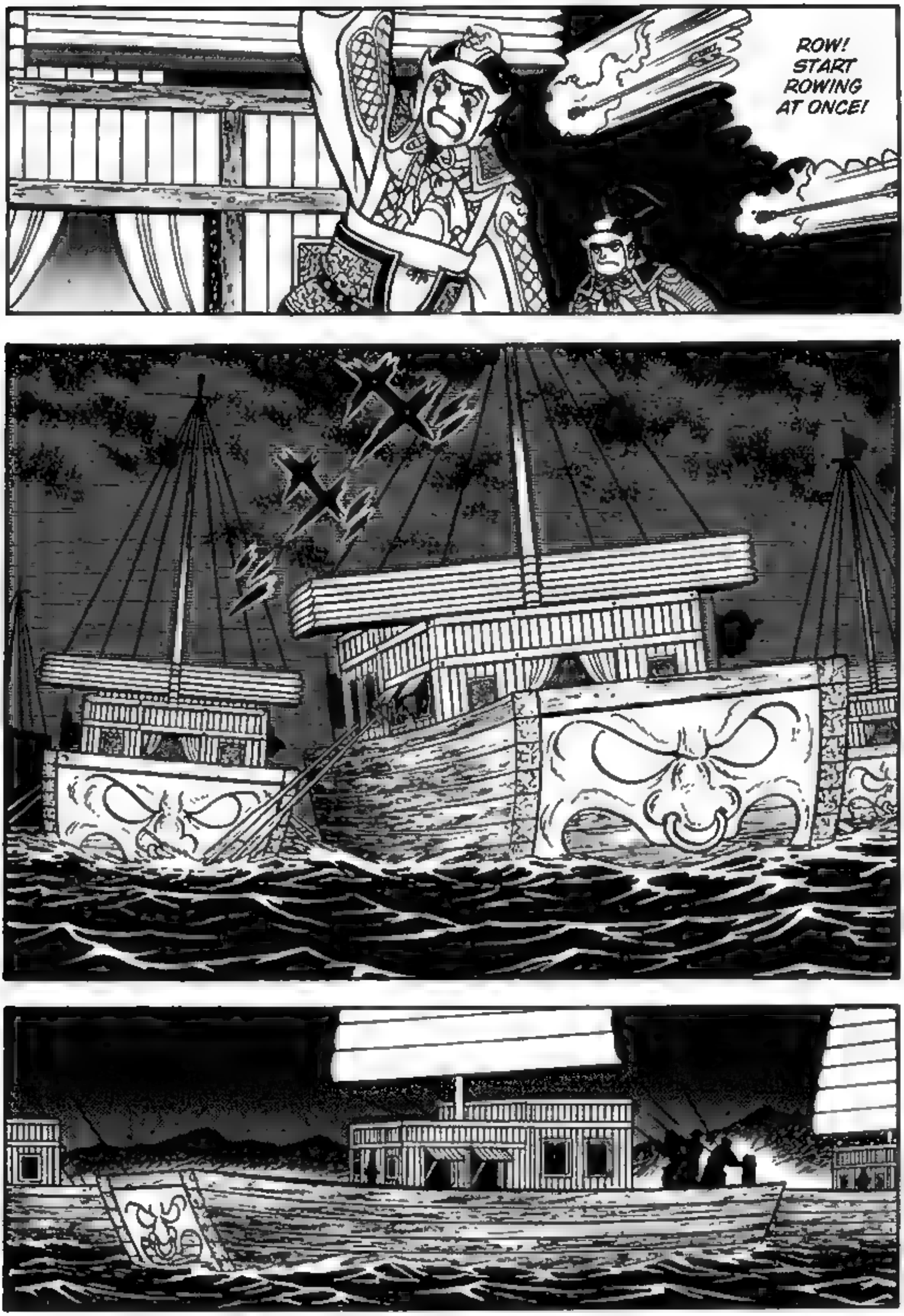
GET THE SHIPS OUT FROM HERE!



RAISE THE SAILS!



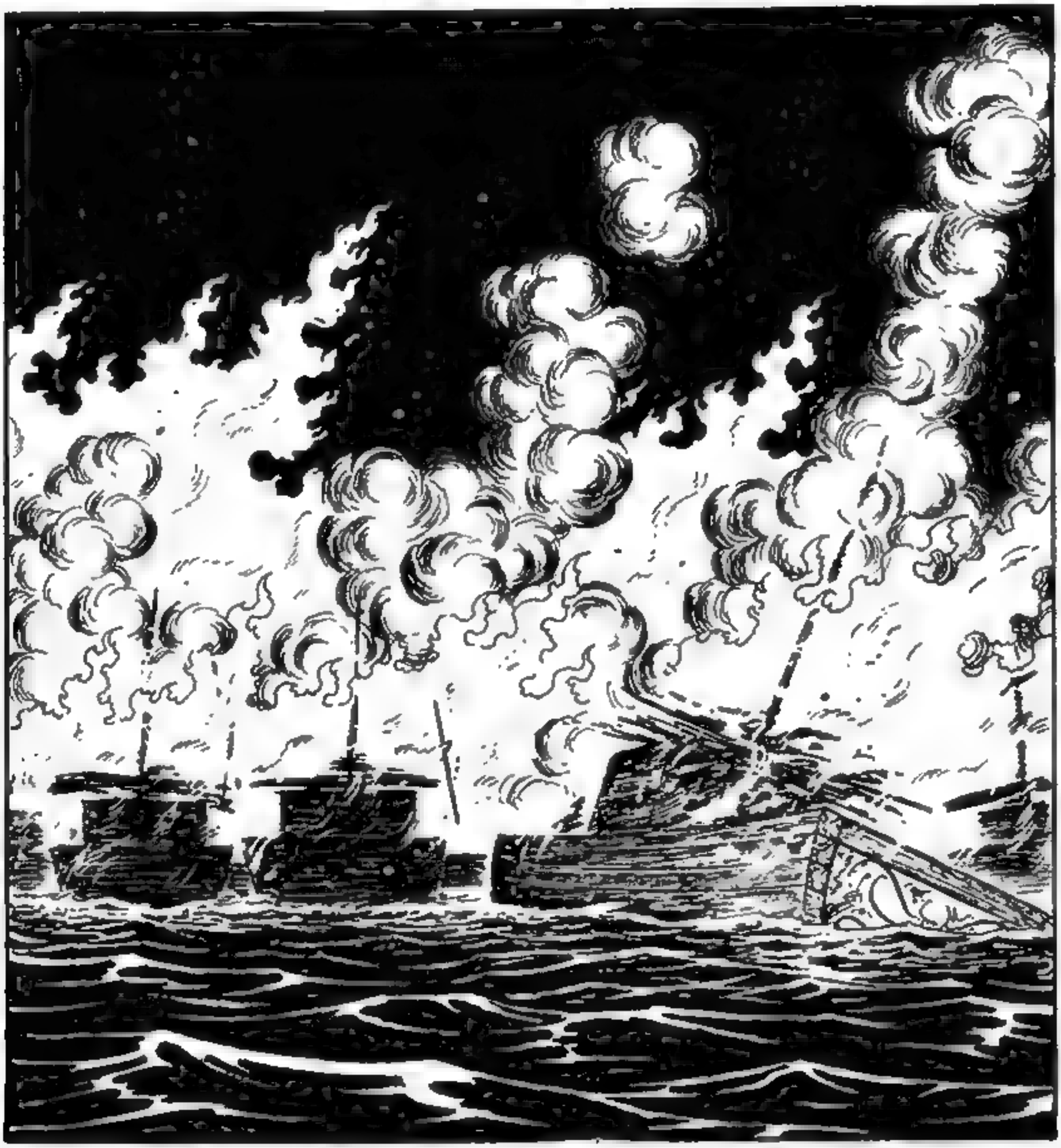



ROW!
START
ROWING
AT ONCE!

ZHUGE JIN, THE COMMANDER OF THIS FLEET, WAS IN UTTER SHOCK.

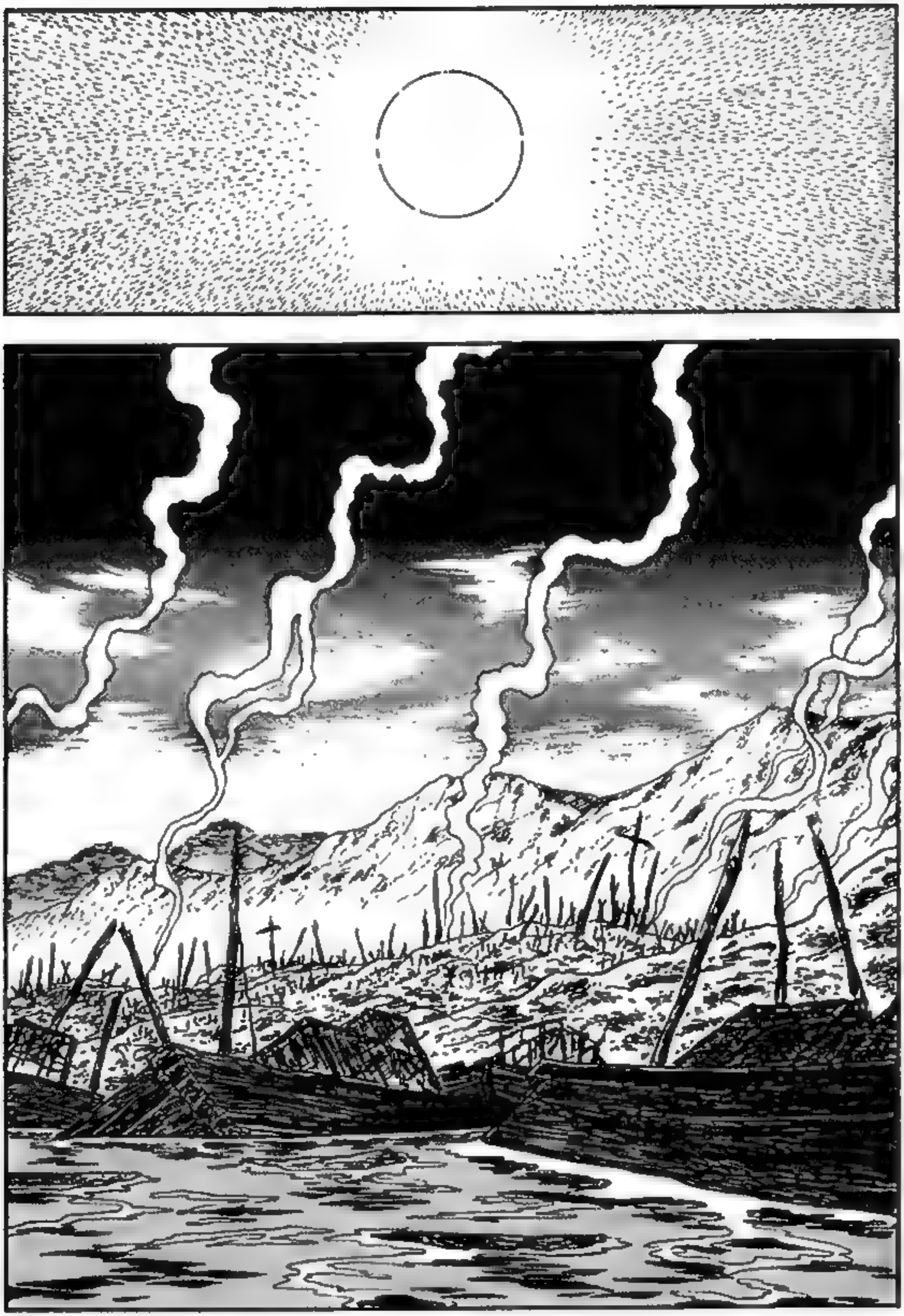
HOW CAN THIS BE...

AHHH!



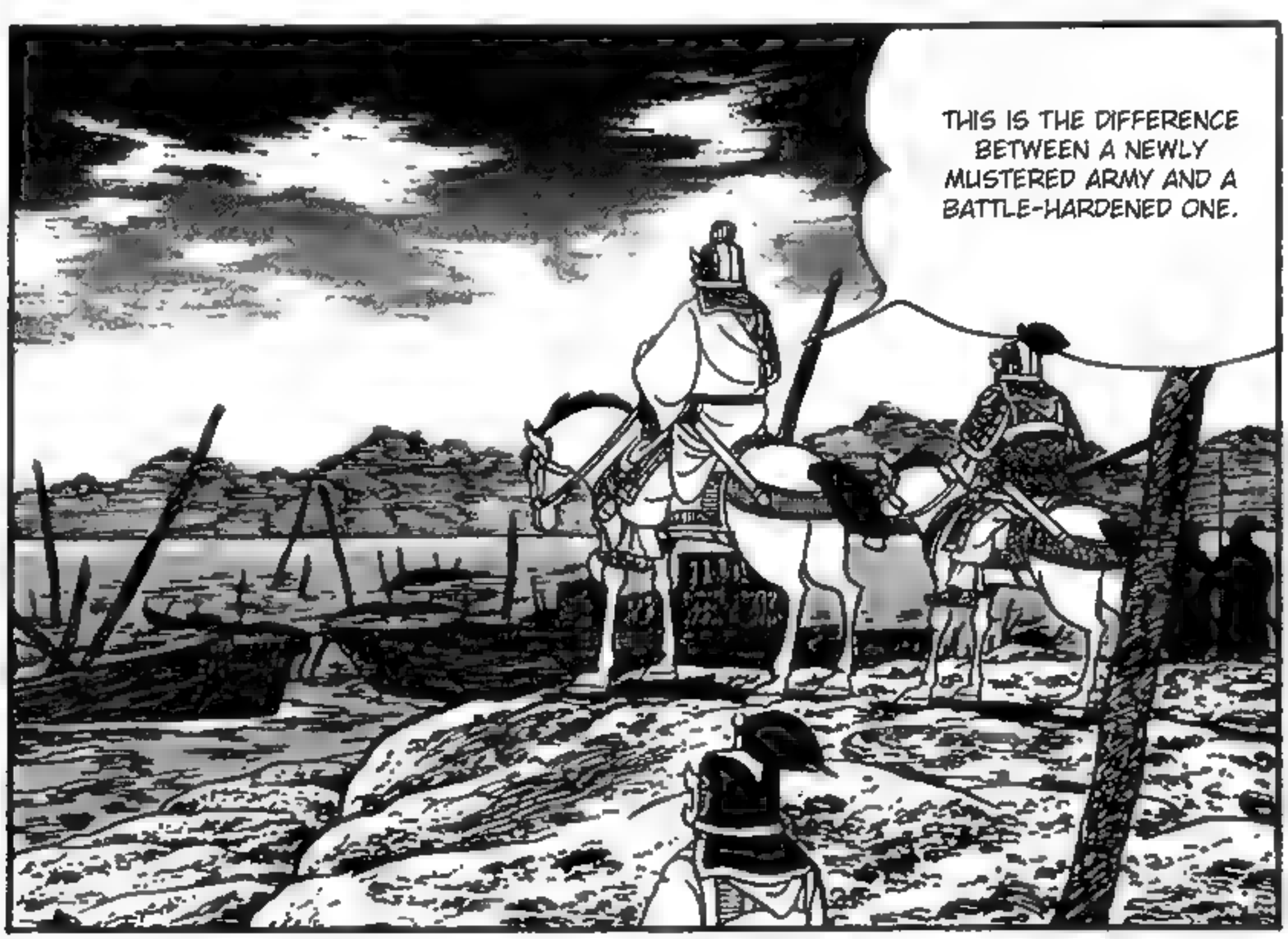
WE'LL JUST HAVE TO ACCEPT OUR LOSES AND REGROUP AT MIANKOU...

THE SNEAK ATTACK COST WU HUNDREDS OF SHIPS, ALONG WITH GRAIN AND OTHER SUPPLIES.



WHAT DID I TELL YOU, MAN CHONG?

YOU WERE RIGHT


THIS IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A NEWLY MUSTERED ARMY AND A BATTLE-HARDENED ONE.

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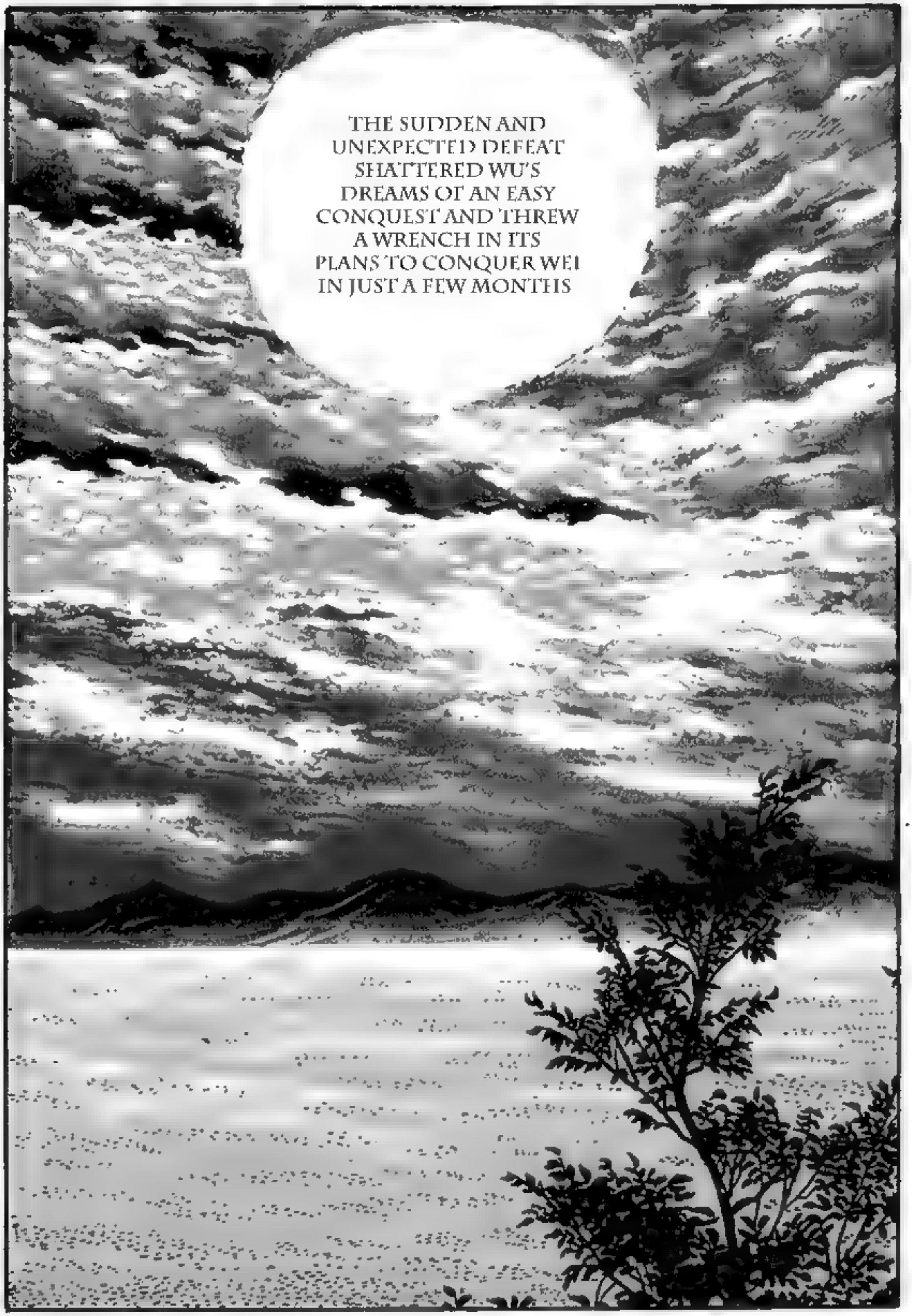
YES, OUR LOSSES WERE UNEXPECTEDLY QUITE HIGH, SIR.

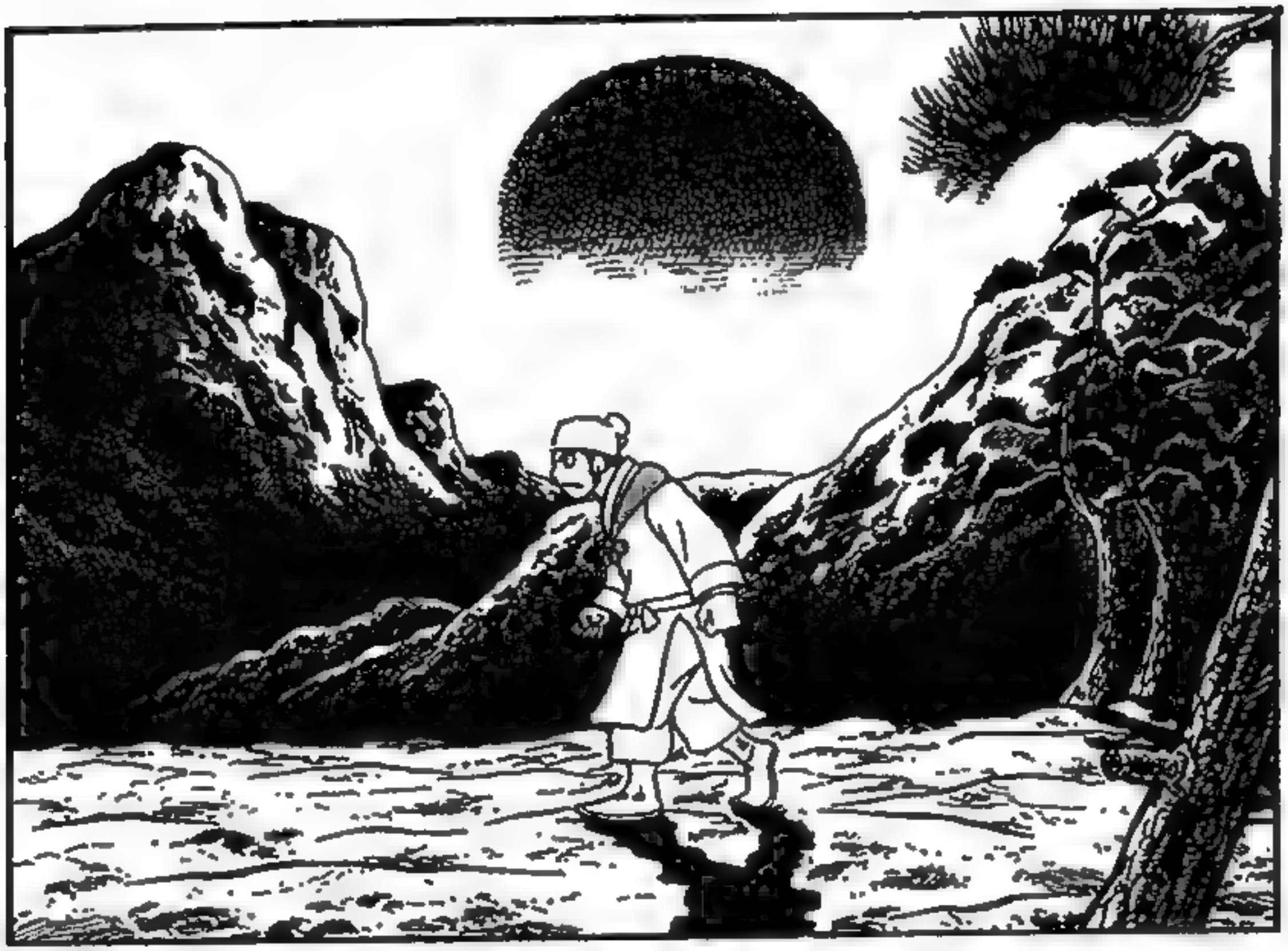
WHAT!? ZHUGE JIN'S TROOPS WERE BEATEN BACK TO MIANKOU AFTER A SURPRISE ATTACK AT NIGHT!?

WE MAY HAVE UNDERESTIMATED WEI...

TO THINK WEI STILL HAD ENOUGH EXPERIENCED TROOPS TO HANDLE US DOWN HERE IN SPITE OF ALL THE LOSSES THEY'VE TAKEN ON THE WESTERN FRONT TO SHU OVER THE YEARS...


THE SUDDEN AND
UNEXPECTED DEFEAT
SHATTERED WU'S
DREAMS OF AN EASY
CONQUEST AND THREW
A WRENCH IN ITS
PLANS TO CONQUER WEI
IN JUST A FEW MONTHS

EXPOSED PLAN



YOU THERE!
HALT!

THEN WE WILL CONDUCT A BODY SEARCH.

I SWEAR I'M NOT ANYONE SUSPCIOUS!

I... I'M JUST A WANDERING TRAVELLER, SIR.

STATE YOUR IDENTITY.

WEI AND WU ARMIES ARE BATTLING IN THIS GENERAL AREA. ANY MAN, WOMAN, OR CHILD WHO WOULD WANDER HERE IS BY DEFINITION, SUSPICIOUS.

YES, SIR.

SEARCH HIM.

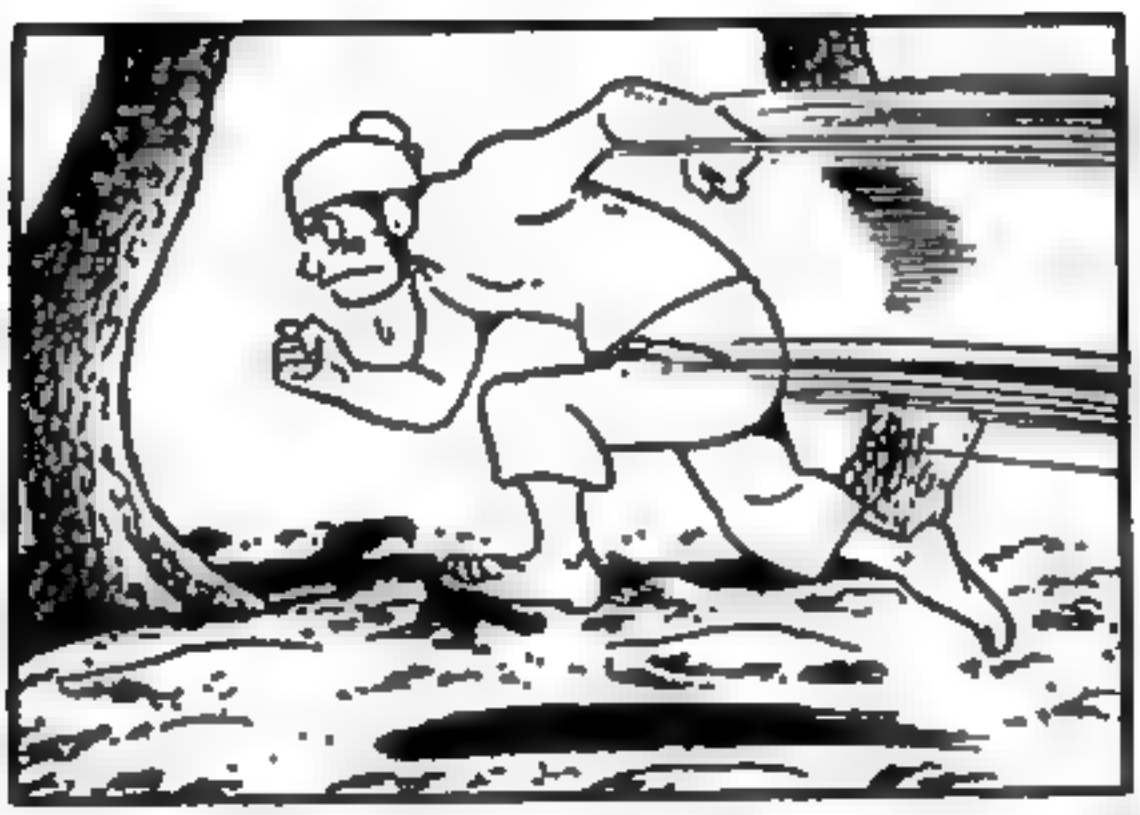
STRIP HIM!

THERE ISN'T ANYTHING OF INTEREST IN HIS BAG, SIR.

HM?

I FEEL SOMETHING IN THE SEAMS HERE.

WHAT!?



A LETTER?

HM!?

AHHH! THIS IS A LETTER ADDRESSED TO SUN QUAN FROM LU XUN!

SO HE WAS A SPY!

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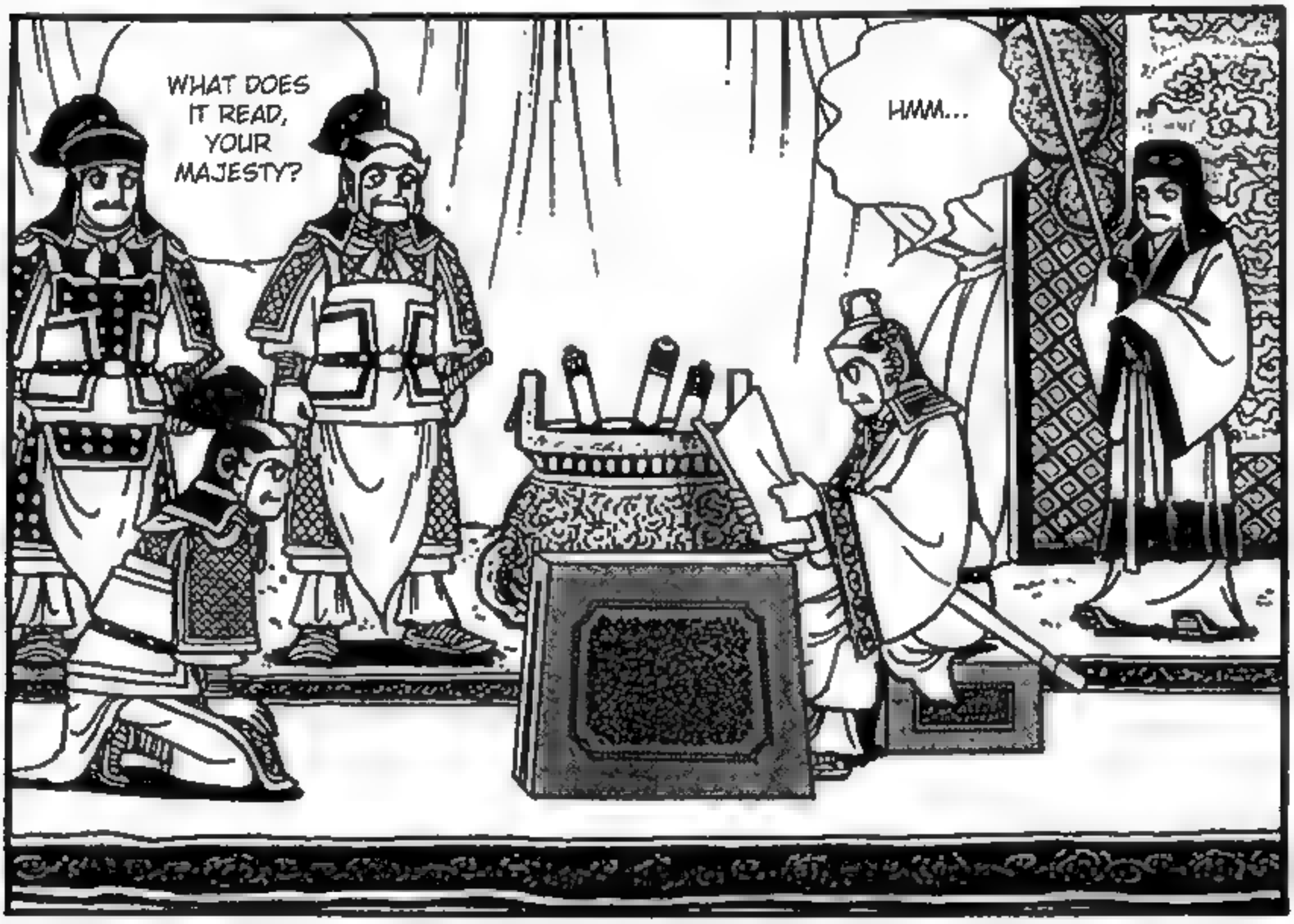
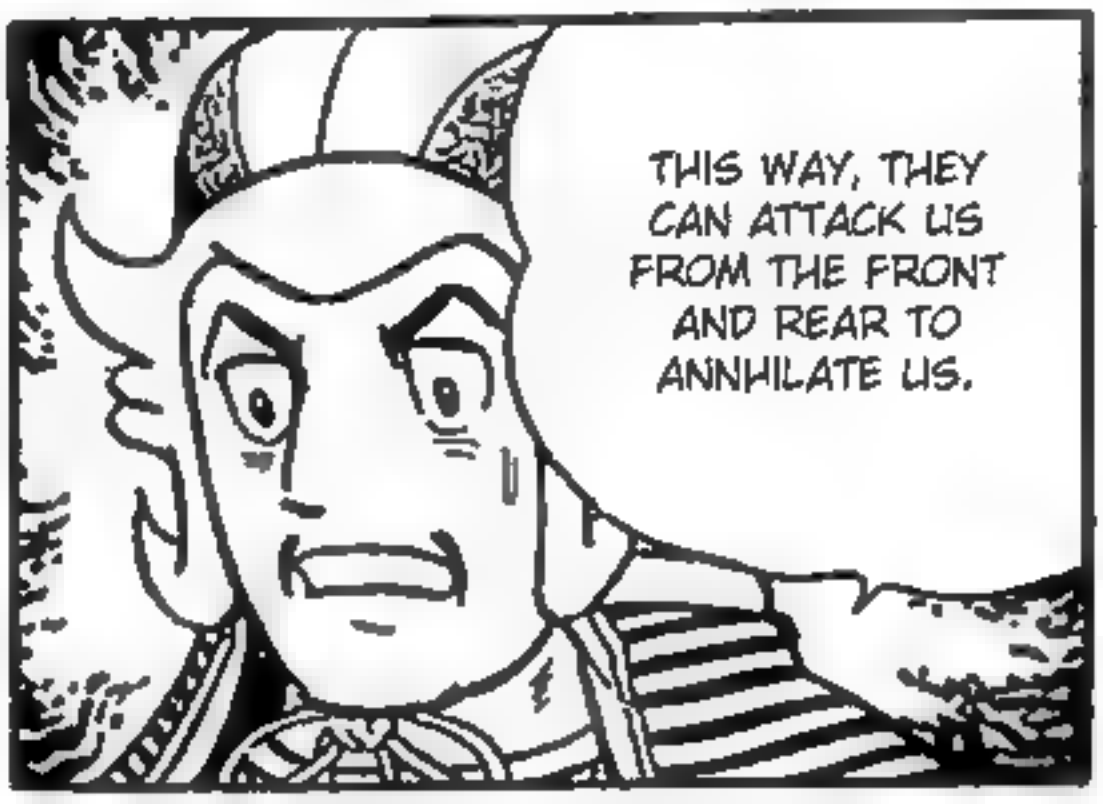
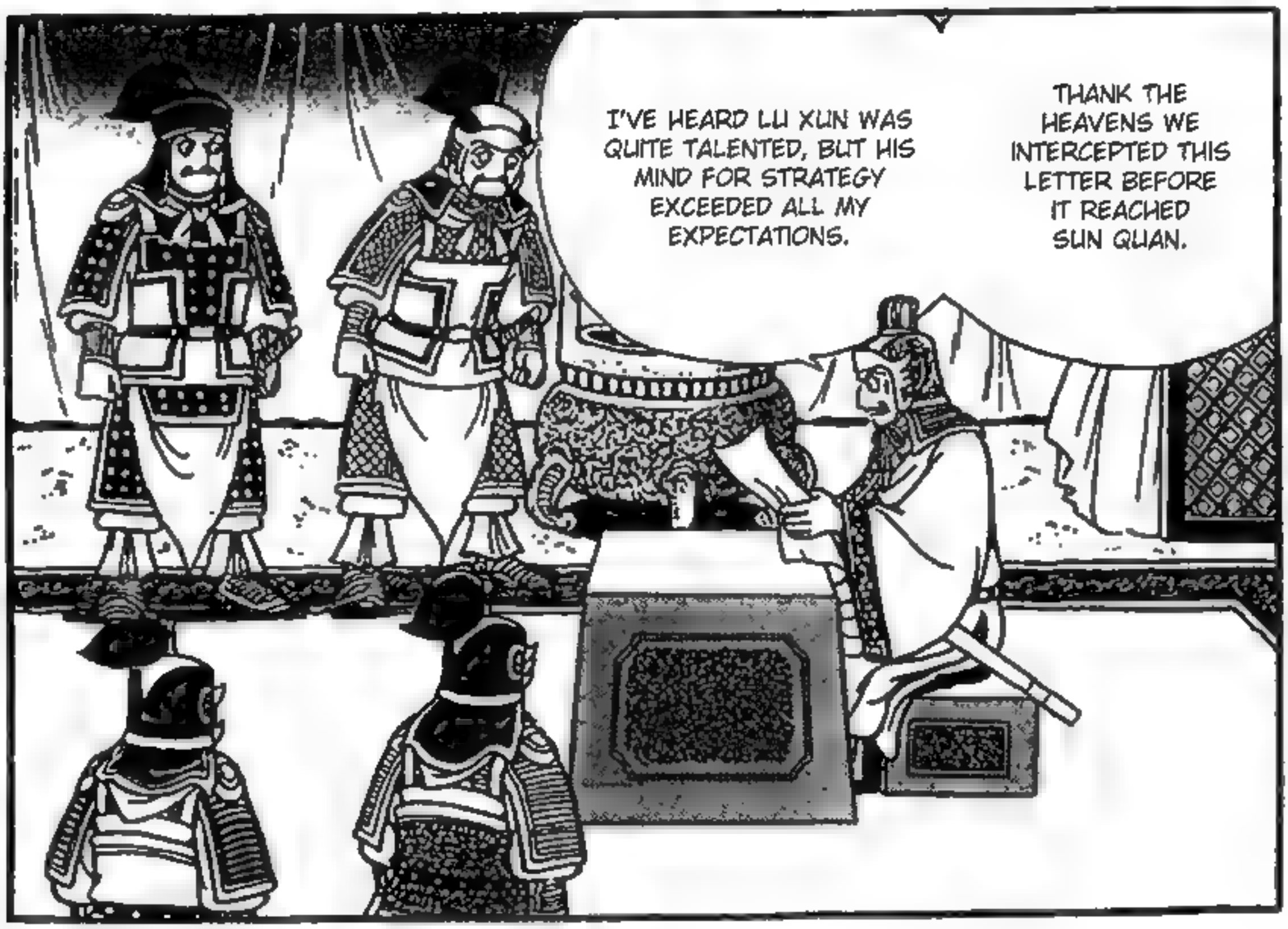

WHAT DOES IT READ, YOUR MAJESTY?
HMM...

WHAT!?

LU XUN ASKS SUN QUAN TO TEMPORARILY ABANDON THE SIEGE OF XINCHENG TO INSTEAD HEAD OVER HERE AND CUT OFF OUR ARMY'S RETREAT ROUTE.

HE'S RIGHT, THAT WOULD PUSH US INTO OUR GRAVES.


THIS WAY, THEY CAN ATTACK US FROM THE FRONT AND REAR TO ANNHILATE US.


I'VE HEARD LU XUN WAS QUITE TALENTED, BUT HIS MIND FOR STRATEGY EXCEEDED ALL MY EXPECTATIONS.
THANK THE HEAVENS WE INTERCEPTED THIS LETTER BEFORE IT REACHED SUN QUAN.

YES, SIR.
SEND OUT ORDERS TO KEEP AN EXTRA TIGHT WATCH ON ANY POSSIBLE MOVEMENTS BY EITHER SUN QUAN'S OR LU XUN'S ARMIES.
WEI MESSENGERS RUSHED OUT TO DELIVER THE WARNING

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GOOD, ESCORT HIM HERE.

GENERAL ZHUGE JIN HAS ARRIVED AT OUR CAMP, SIR.

YES, SIR.

I'VE COME TO CONSULT YOUR WISDOM, LU XUN.

WHAT BRINGS YOU HERE, ZHUGE JIN?

MEANWHILE, WEI HAS SENT FAR MORE VETERAN TROOPS DOWN HERE THAN WE ANTICIPATED. BREAKING PAST THEIR DEFENSES WILL BE VERY TOUGH.

NOT ONLY DID MY RECENT DEFEAT COST OUR ARMY MANY TROOPS AND SUPPLIES, BUT THE CURRENT HEAT WAVE HAS ALSO LEFT OUR MEN WEAK AND DESPIRITED.

BUT WORRY NOT, FOR I HAVE A PLAN.

YES, AND WEI IS SENDING MORE RESOURCES AND TROOPS DOWN HERE BY DAY.

NOW THAT THE ENEMIES ARE MORE THAN PREPARED TO COUNTER THAT PLAN, THIS WAR CAN ONLY BE A LONG AND ARDUOUS ONE.

YOU SEE, I ORIGINALLY HAD A STRATEGY TO OVERWHELM CAO RUI'S ARMY TO MAKE A BREAK-THROUGH, BUT MY MESSENGER WAS CAUGHT AND THE PLAN EXPOSED.

THUS, I'VE SUGGESTED TO OUR EMPEROR THAT IT WOULD BE BEST TO CUT OUR LOSSES AND RETIRE GRADUALLY.

BUT THIS WAR WAS ORIGINALLY REQUESTED BY SHU, AND THERE IS NO REAL NEED FOR US TO LOSE AN ARM AND A LEG TO HELP THEM.

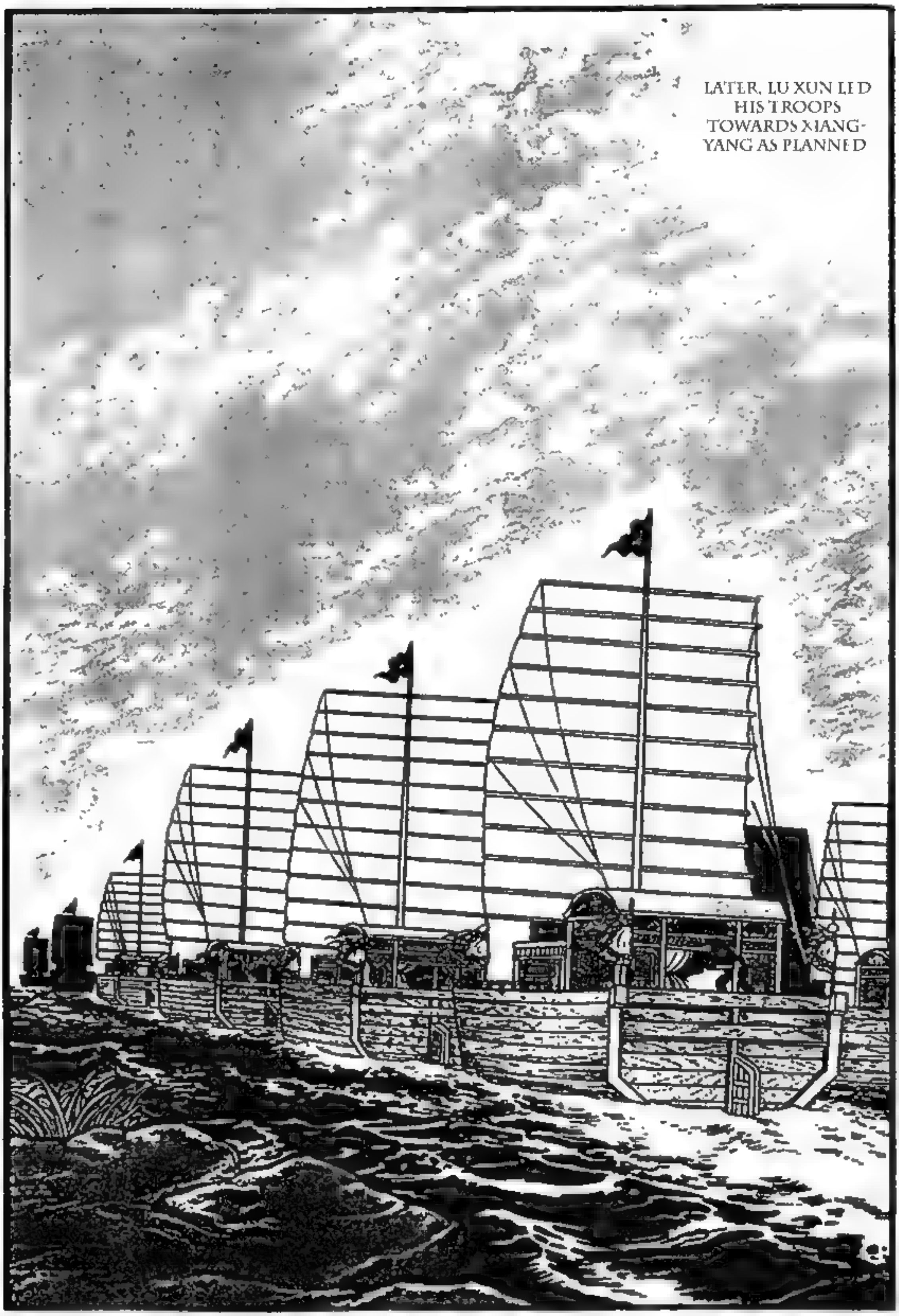
NO, A SUDDEN WITHDRAWAL WILL ONLY PROVOKE AN AGGRESSIVE WEI PURSUIT, WHICH IS THE MOST DANGEROUS THREAT.

RETIRE GRADUALLY? WOULD IT NOT BE BEST TO RETIRE AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE IF WE'RE TRYING TO CUT OUR LOSSES?

YOU, TOO, SHOULD SECRETLY PREPARE YOUR SHIPS TO WITHDRAW BUT FEIGN AN INTENT TO KEEP ATTACKING IN THE MEANTIME.

UNDERSTOOD, SIR.

AS FOR ME, I WILL LEAD MY TROOPS TO XIANGYANG TO THROW THE ENEMIES OFF. ONLY THEN, WE WILL HAVE THE CHANCE TO STAGE A QUICK WITHDRAWAL.


LATER, LU XUN LED
HIS TROOPS
TOWARDS XIANG-
YANG AS PLANNED

WHAT!?

WE'VE SPOTTED LU XUN'S TROOPS HEADING TO XIANGYANG, YOUR MAJESTY!

NO, REMAIN CALM.

WE MUST CHECK HIS ADVANCE AT ONCE, YOUR MAJESTY!

WE MUST EXERCISE CAUTION AND REMAIN STILL FOR THE MOMENT.

LU XUN IS A CUNNING MAN. THIS ADVANCE MAY BE JUST A BAIT TO LURE US AWAY FROM HERE OR INTO SOME TRAP.

YES, YOUR MAJESTY.

TELL ALL OFFICERS TO KEEP THE TROOPS ON GUARD AND STAY ON THE DEFENSIVE.

SEVERAL DAYS LATER.

YES, THEY'VE ALREADY WITHDRAWN THROUGH SEPARATE ROUTES.

WHAT!? ALL ENEMY ARMIES HAVE RETIRED!?

IN ANY CASE, IF THE ENEMIES HAVE RETREATED, THERE IS NO REASON FOR US TO REMAIN HERE.

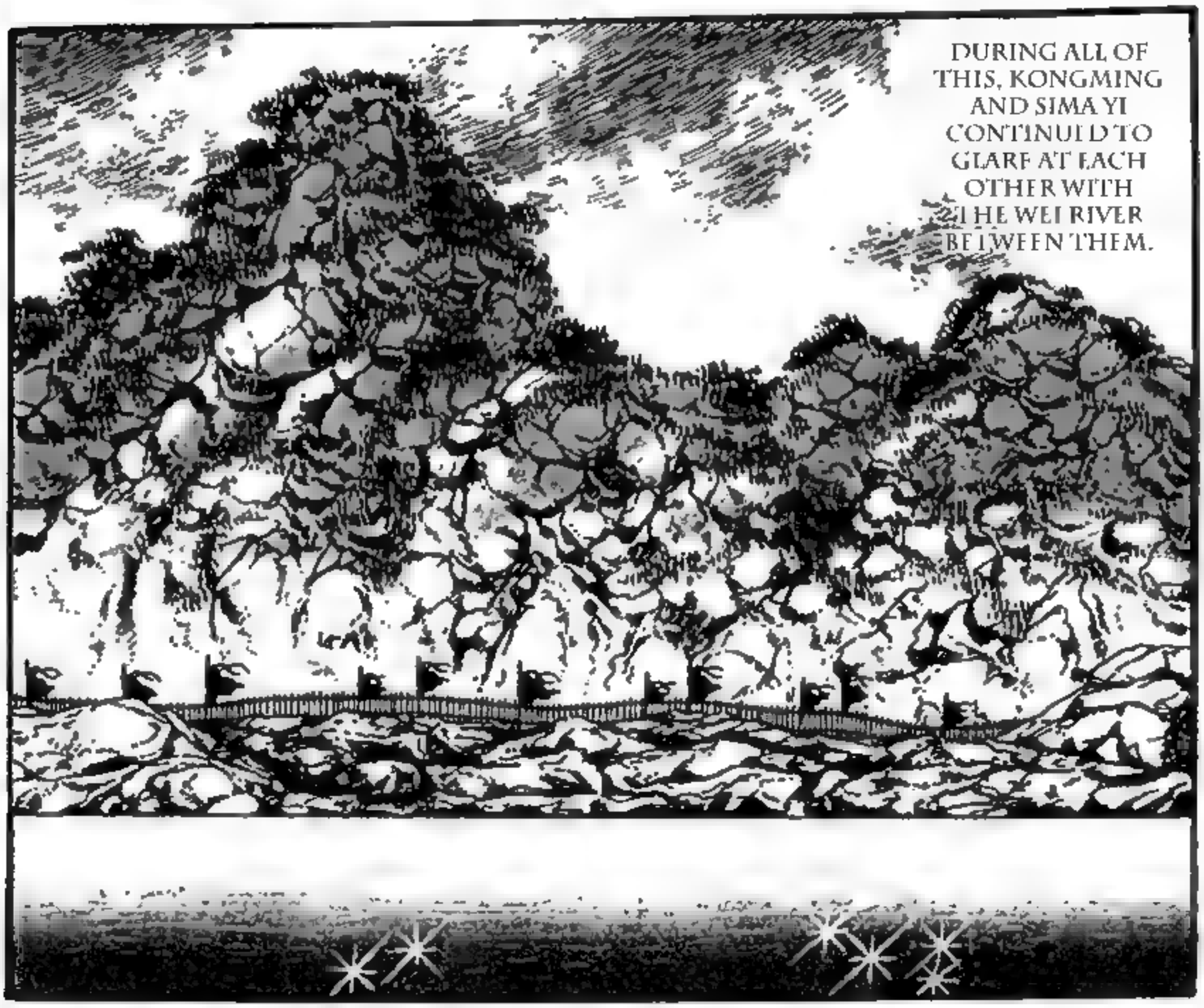
SO LU XUN'S REAL PLAN WAS TO GET US TO STAY ON THE DEFENSE... I DARESAY HIS SKILL IS NOT INFERIOR TO THAT OF SUN TZU.

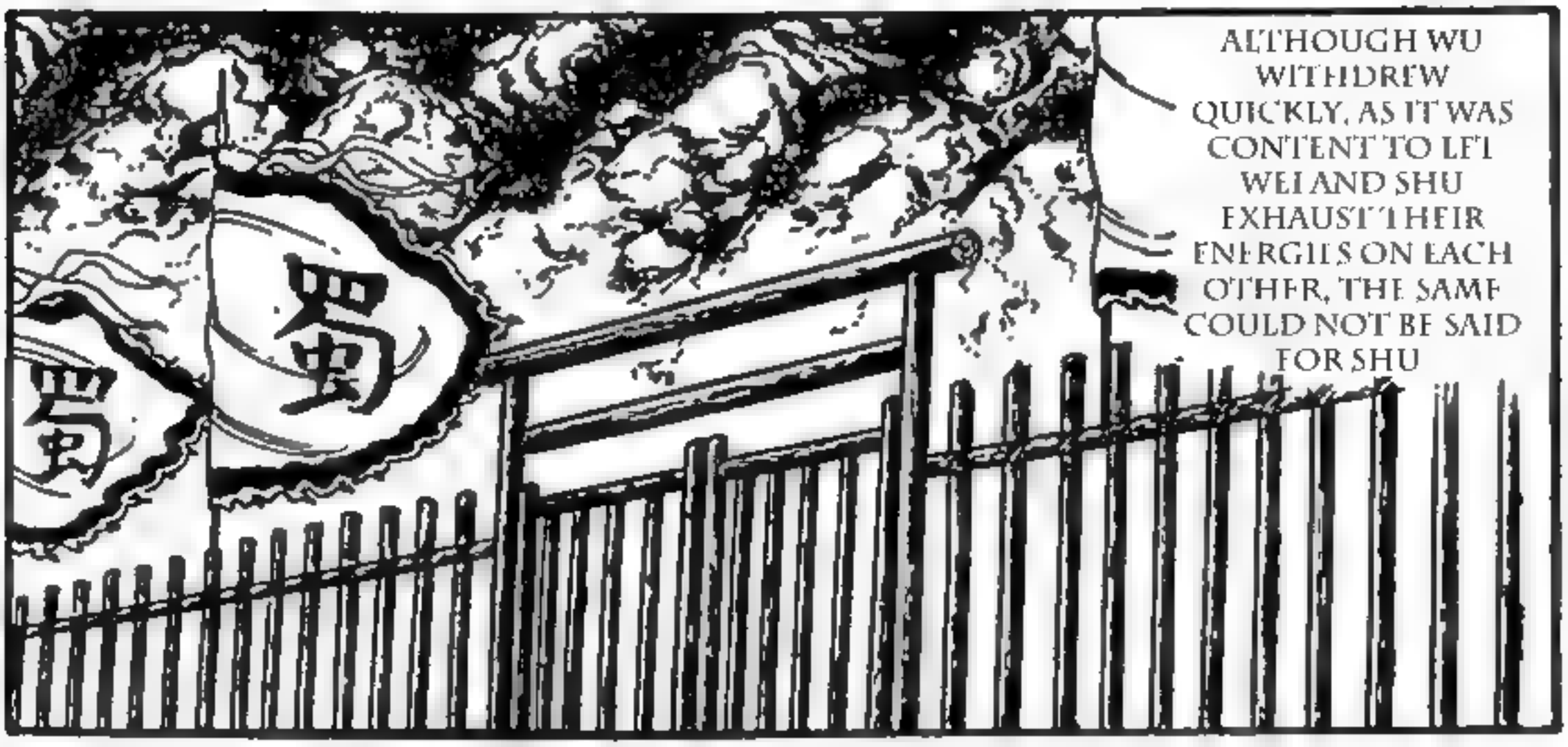
YES, SIR.

BUT MAKE SURE TO TIGHTEN OUR DEFENSES ALONG OUR SOUTHERN BORDERS TO MAKE SURE LU XUN CANNOT EXPLOIT IT IN THE FUTURE.

WITH THIS, CAO RUI WITHDREW HIS ARMY BACK TO HEFEI, WHERE IT CAREFULLY OBSERVED POSSIBLE SIGNS OF ANOTHER WU ATTACK.

SEEDS OF REBELLION




ALTHOUGH WU WITHDREW QUICKLY, AS IT WAS CONTENT TO LET WEI AND SHU EXHAUST THEIR ENERGIES ON EACH OTHER, THE SAME COULD NOT BE SAID FOR SHU

A RETREAT NOW WOULD MEAN TO ACCEPT THE INEVITABILITY OF SHU'S DECLINE AND END.

IN KONGMING'S MIND, IT WAS PREFERABLE TO SEEK A PATH TO SURVIVAL EVEN AT THE COST OF WAR, THAN TO PASSIVELY WAIT FOR WEI TO BRING ITS SUPERIOR RESOURCES TO EVENTUALLY SUBDUE SHU

THUS, KONGMING HAD SOME OF HIS TROOPS TILL THE LANDS TO PREPARE FOR A DRAWN OUT CAMPAIGN

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OH, THAT'S QUITE BRAVE OF YOU.

I DISGUISED AS A LOCAL PEASANT AND SCOUTED OUT THE ENEMY LANDS IN THE PAST 2-3 DAYS.

YES, SO I'VE HEARD.

YES, AND I SAW THAT THE SHU TROOPS WERE NOW TILLING THE LANDS TO PREPARE FOR A LONG WAR.

DID YOU FORGET THAT THE EMPEROR GAVE US STRICT ORDERS TO STAY ON THE DEFENSIVE AND NOT ENGAGE IN ANY OFFENSIVE MANEUVERS? I, TOO, THINK HIS ADVICE IS SOUND.

FATHER, WE HAVE NEARLY THREE TIMES AS MANY TROOPS AS THE ENEMY DOES. WHY IS IT THAT YOU REFUSE TO FIGHT EVEN WITH OVERWHELMING SUPERIORITY?

OH? WHAT DO THEY THINK?

NO, I HAVEN'T FORGOTTEN, BUT ARE YOU AWARE OF WHAT MANY OF YOUR OFFICERS THINK ABOUT YOU CURRENTLY?

WELL .. I'M AFRAID I CANNOT DENY THAT. KONGMING IS STILL SUPERIOR IN HIS WIT.

THEY THINK KONGMING HAS YOU COMPLETELY PEGGED DOWN AND YOU ARE INCAPABLE OF OUTWITTING HIM.

WHAT OF THE PHRASE, "LEAD WITH YOUR BEST SKILLS?" THE CUNNING USE THEIR WITS, WHILE THE STRONG USE THEIR BRAWNS.

EVEN WITH OUR SUPERIOR NUMBERS, I DO NOT HAVE CONFIDENCE IN OUR VICTORY.

IF WE HAVE SUPERIOR MANPOWER AND RESOURCES, WE SHOULD USE IT FOR A DECISIVE BATTLE.

PLEASE EXCUSE MY COMMENT, FATHER, BUT I THINK YOU MAY BE SELLING YOURSELF A LITTLE TOO SHORT. YOU ARE STILL WEI'S MOST CAPABLE COMMANDER.

MY BRAIN IS ENTIRELY CONSUMED BY THE QUESTION OF HOW TO AVOID DEFEAT, THAT I DARE NOT TRY TO THINK ABOUT HOW TO WIN.

JUST UNDERSTAND THAT WHILE THE DEFENSIVE APPROACH IS SOUND, THE FRUSTRATION OF HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF MEN IN OUR ARMY GROWS BY DAY.

YES, I WILL.

THE ENEMIES HAVE COME TO BAIT US OUT AGAIN, SIR.

WHAT'S THIS RUCKUS?

SEE THIS, COWARDS!?

HM?

YOU SHOULD'VE SEEN THE LOOK OF PANIC ON HIS FACE!

HE DROPPED IT IN SHEER TERROR WHEN HE WAS FLEEING FROM OUR TROOPS IN THE PREVIOUS BATTLE!

THIS BELONGS TO YOUR COMMANDER, SIMA YI!

HAHAHA! AS IF THE LACKEYS OF A COWARD LIKE SIMA YI WOULD HAVE THE GUTS FOR THAT!

IF YOU CALL YOURSELVES MEN, I DARE YOU TO COME AND GET IT!

PLEASE GIVE ME PERMIS-SION TO ATTACK, SIR!

NGHH!

THEY MAKE FOOLS OF US EVERY DAY! WE CANNOT ENDURE THIS HUMILIATION MUCH LONGER!

I REFUSE!

CAN YOU NOT UNDERSTAND THEY ARE ONLY TRYING TO BAIT US INTO ANOTHER TRAP!?

ARE YOU A MAN OR A PETULANT CHILD!? ARE YOU IGNORANT OF THE ANALECTS, IN WHICH CONFUCIUS STATES, "THOSE WHO CANNOT ENDURE SMALL MATTERS CAN NEVER HOPE TO ACCOMPLISH GREAT MATTERS."

.....

PAY THEM NO HEED!

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NO, SIR.

THEY DIDN'T RESPOND TO ANY OF OUR INSULTS AGAIN?

YES, SIR.

STOP THE INSULTS FOR NOW. I WILL TRY SOMETHING ELSE.

NONE OF OUR PLANS CAN WORK ON AN UNMOVING ENEMY...

HOW CAN I GET SIMA YI TO COME OUT...?

DID WE NOT COME ALL THE WAY HERE TO FIGHT!? BUT WHAT ARE WE DOING NOW!? FARMING! LIKE FILTHY PEASANTS!

THE CHANCELLOR IS A COWARD!

I THOUGHT WE WERE WAGING WAR, NOT A STARING CONTEST WITH WEI! DO YOU KNOW WHY THE CHANCELLOR WON'T TRY OTHER APPROACHES TO CHANG'AN AND INSTEAD REMAINS HERE AT QISHAN!?

BECAUSE HE IS AFRAID! WEI WILL NEVER BE CONQUERED AS LONG AS A COWARD IS LEADING OUR TROOPS!

WEI YAN'S ATTITUDE IS BECOMING WORSE BY DAY...

AT THIS POINT, A FRACTURE WITHIN OUR ARMY IS INEVITABLE IF HE LIVES.

THE CONSTANT AND HARSH YEARS OF CAMPAIGNING WITH INADEQUATE COMPENSATION HAS MANAGED TO SPROUT THE SEEDS OF REBELLION HIDDEN IN WEI YAN'S HEART...

I CAN HANDLE AN UNRULY GENERAL, BUT THE REAL DANGER IS THE POSSIBILITY OF HIM DEFECTING TO WEI.

BUT IF I TURN ON WEI YAN, THEN I'LL ALSO HAVE TO DEAL WITH HIS LOYAL TROOPS WHO'VE RISKED THEIR LIVES WITH HIM ALL THESE YEARS...

I MUST TAKE CARE TO DO IT IN A WAY THAT WILL NOT PROVOKE HIS FOLLOWERS...

AS MUCH AS I VALUE HIS TALENTS, THE TIME TO NIP THESE SPROUTS OF REBELLION IN THE BUDS HAS COME...

YES, SIR.

MA DAI. GO TO GOURD VALLEY AND CONSTRUCT A CAMP THERE ACCORDING TO THESE PLANS.

YES?

ONE QUESTION, SIR.

THE INTERIOR OF THIS CAMP IS LAID WITH YOUR SPECIAL MINES AND THERE ARE LOTS OF FLAMMABLES BESIDE STORAGE SPACES... AM I READING THIS CORRECTLY?

AH, I SEE.

YES, THAT IS CORRECT. THIS CAMP IS NOT ACTUALLY FOR OUR TROOPS. WE WILL LURE SIMA YI THERE.

OH?

THE DECISIVE BATTLE WILL TAKE PLACE THERE, AND OUR "CAMP" WILL BECOME HIS GRAVE.

MA DAI LED HIS TROOPS TO GOURD VALLEY TO CARRY OUT THE TOP SECRET PLAN

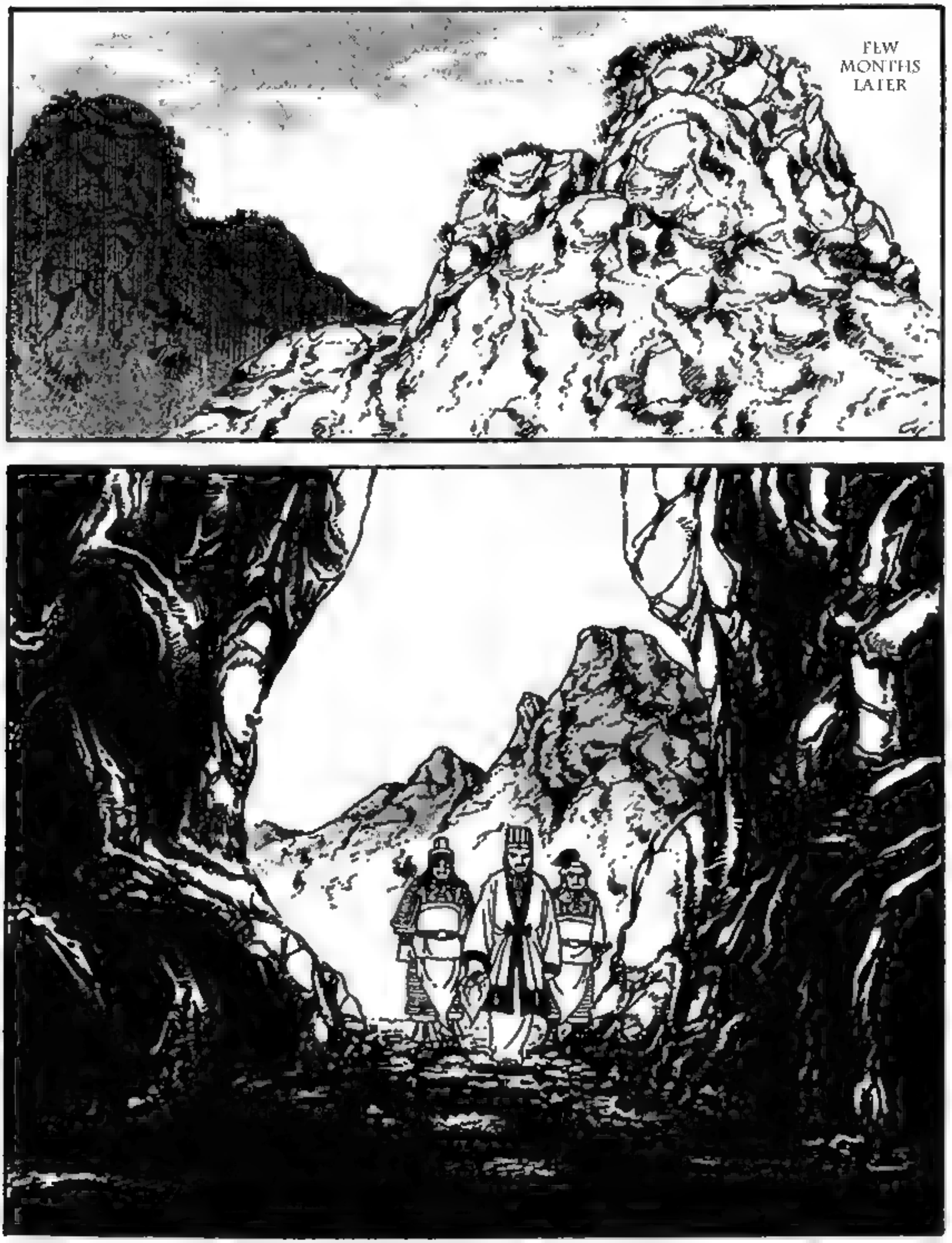
I PLACE GREAT TRUST IN YOU. DO NOT REVEAL THIS PLAN TO ANYONE ELSE, EVEN OUR OWN OFFICERS.

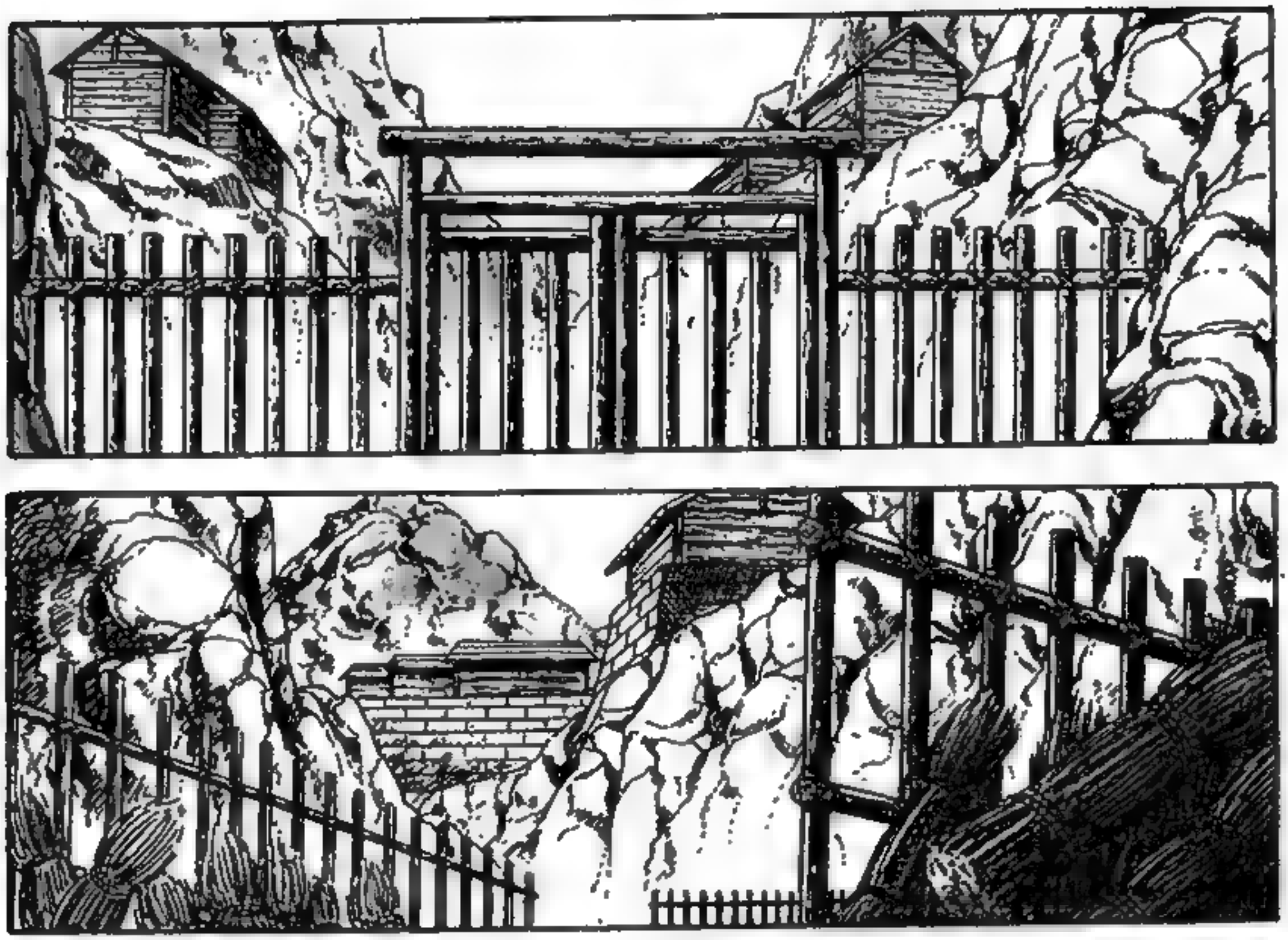
I'M HONOURED, SIR...

THERE, PITS
WERE DUG
TO HIDE
THE MINES.

AND THE
BAMBOO SHOOTS
CONTAINING THE
FUSES WERE LAID
THROUGH
CARVED CLIFFS
AND OVER HILLS
TO MAKE THEM
INCONSPICUOUS
AS POSSIBLE

FIRE TRAP




AT LAST, I HAVE A SHOT AT BURYING SIMA YI AND HIS ARMY.
YES, THE CAMP WAS BUILT JUST AS YOU SPECIFIED, SIR.
WELL DONE. I ASSUME MY PLANS WERE FOLLOWED METICULOUSLY?

ONLY SOO?

WHEN THE TIME COMES, I WANT YOU TO LEAD SOO SOLDIERS AND CHALLENGE SIMA YI.

THE BIG DIPPER BANNER?

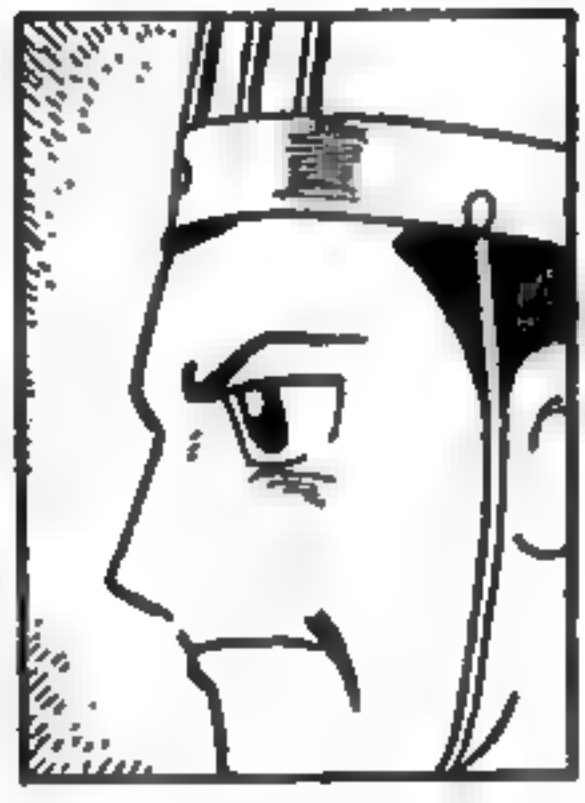
DURING DAY, THE BIG DIPPER BANNER OFF IN THE DISTANCE WILL GUIDE THE DIRECTION TO WHICH SIMA YI IS TO BE LURED. AT NIGHT, USE WHERE THE SEVEN LAMPS ARE SHINING INSTEAD.

YES, THE SMALL FORCE IS NECESSARY TO LURE HIM. YOUR JOB IS NOT TO FIGHT, BUT TO FEIGN DEFEAT CONVINCINGLY.

OH, REALLY? YOU SURE ABOUT THAT?

ONCE YOU'VE MANAGED TO LURE HIM INTO GOURD VALLEY, VICTORY WILL BE OURS.

FINE, I'LL GET THE JOB DONE.
YES.



THE TONE OF DOUBT AND DEFIANCE IN WEI YAN S RESPONSE WAS PALPABLE

BACK AND FORTH?

LEAD A SUPPLY TRAIN OF 20-30 WOODEN OXES BACK AND FORTH ACROSS THE HILLS.

GAO XIANG.

YES?

I SEE.

YES, BUT YOU CANNOT LET THEM FIND OUT THAT'S WHAT YOU INTENDED.

WHAT!?

YES, AND YOU WILL BE REWARDED IF YOU LET THE ENEMIES CAPTURE OUR GRAIN.

AS FOR ME, I WILL GO TO GOURD VALLEY. THE REST OF YOU OFFICERS WILL REMAIN HERE AT QISHAN AND SEE TO IT THAT THE TROOPS CONTINUE TO FARM THE FIELDS.

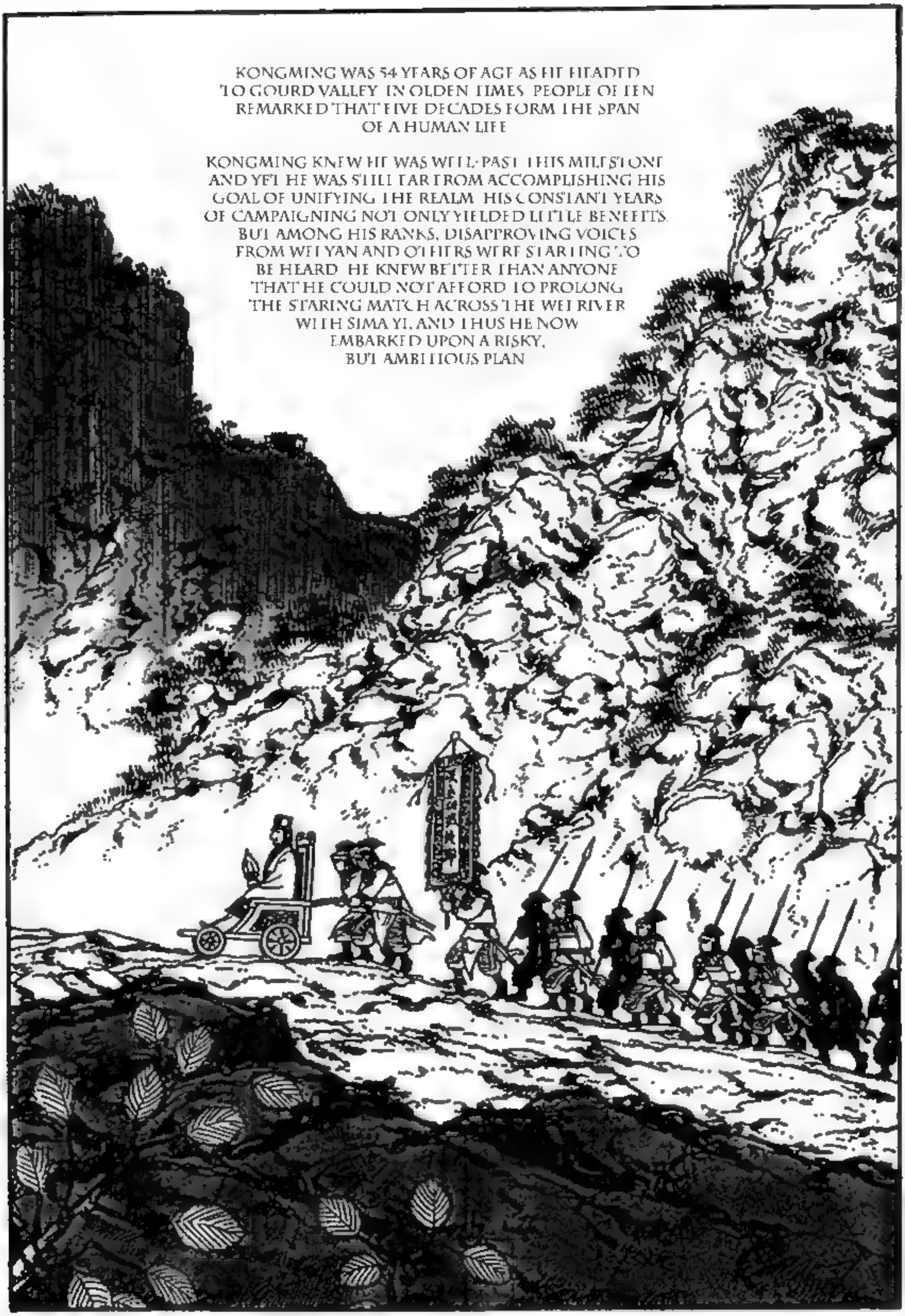
IF WEI TROOPS UNDER THE COMMAND OF ANYONE OTHER THAN SIMA YI ATTACKS, YOU ARE TO FEIGN DEFEEAT AND GIVE GROUND.

UNDERSTOOD, SIR.
HOWEVER, IF SIMA YI IS PERSONALLY LEADING THE ATTACK, YOU WILL ATTACK THE SOUTHERN BANK OF THE WEI RIVER TO CUT OFF HIS RETREAT ROUTE!

HAVING ISSUED THESE ORDERS, EACH OFFICER LEFT FOR THEIR ASSIGNED POSITIONS.

KONGMING WAS 54 YEARS OF AGE AS HE HEADED
TO GOURD VALLEY. IN OLDEN TIMES, PEOPLE OF TEN
REMARKED THAT FIVE DECADES FORM THE SPAN
OF A HUMAN LIFE.

KONGMING KNEW HE WAS WELL-PAST THIS MILESTONE
AND YET HE WAS STILL FAR FROM ACCOMPLISHING HIS
GOAL OF UNIFYING THE REALM. HIS CONSTANT YEARS
OF CAMPAIGNING NOT ONLY YIELDED LITTLE BENEFITS,
BUT AMONG HIS RANKS, DISAPPROVING VOICES
FROM WEI YAN AND OTHERS WERE STARTING TO
BE HEARD. HE KNEW BETTER THAN ANYONE
THAT HE COULD NOT AFFORD TO PROLONG
THE STARING MATCH ACROSS THE WEI RIVER
WITH SIMA YI, AND THUS HE NOW
EMBARKED UPON A RISKY,
BUT AMBITIOUS PLAN.



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YES, IT APPEARS SO.

COMMANDER, THE ENEMY FORCES SEEM TO HAVE DISPERSED THEIR TROOPS TO FARM GREATER AMOUNTS OF LAND.

HAHA, THAT'S JUST WHAT KONGMING WANTS US TO DO. STAYING ON THE DEFENSIVE IS THE SAFEST AND SOUNDEST STRATEGY.

THEIR SCATTERED TROOPS ARE VULNERABLE. PLEASE GIVE US PERMISSION TO ATTACK.

THERE IS NO SHAME IN FEARING THE FEARFUL.

WHY DO YOU FEAR KONGMING SO, COMMANDER?

AS THE ENEMIES ARE APPROACHING CLOSER AND CLOSER TO SELF-SUFFICIENCY IN FOOD, THE COMPLE-TION OF THIS NEW BASE WILL ONLY ENTRENCH THEM MORE!

EXACTLY, SIR! WE'VE RECEIVED REPORTS THAT KONGMING IS BUILDING A NEW BASE AT GOLRD VALLEY.

BUT DON'T YOU REALIZE ALL THIS INACTION IS MAKING IT HARDER AND HARDER TO DRIVE OUT THE ENEMIES FROM QISHAN!?

THE ENEMIES ARE TEMPORARILY SCATTERED RIGHT NOW! THERE IS NO BETTER CHANCE THAN NOW!

WE MUST DRIVE THEM OUT BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE, COMMANDER!

TRUE...

IF THE REQUEST IS ACCEPTED, I WILL SEND YOUR TWO OLDER BROTHERS TO LEAD THE ATTACK. I WANT YOU TWO TO STAY BY MY SIDE AND OFFER COUNSEL.

XIAHOU HUI AND XIAHOU HE, AS YOU TWO ARE WELL-VERSED IN MILITARY STRATEGY, I WILL TRUST YOUR JUDGMENT ON THIS OCCASION AND REQUEST THE EMPEROR FOR OFFENSIVE ACTION.

YES, XIAHOU BA AND XIAHOU WEI.

DID YOU CALL US, SIR?

YOUR YOUNGER BROTHERS HAVE CONVINCED ME TO GRANT YOU TWO PERMISSION TO TRY AN ATTACK.

YES, TAKE 5000 TROOPS EACH AND HEAD TOWARDS ONE OF THE NEW SHU CAMPS.

REALLY, SIR!?

THANK YOU FOR CONVINCING THE COMMANDER, HUI AND HE.

GLADLY, SIR!

FINALLY, WE WON'T HAVE TO PLAY THE ROLE OF COWARDS ANYMORE!

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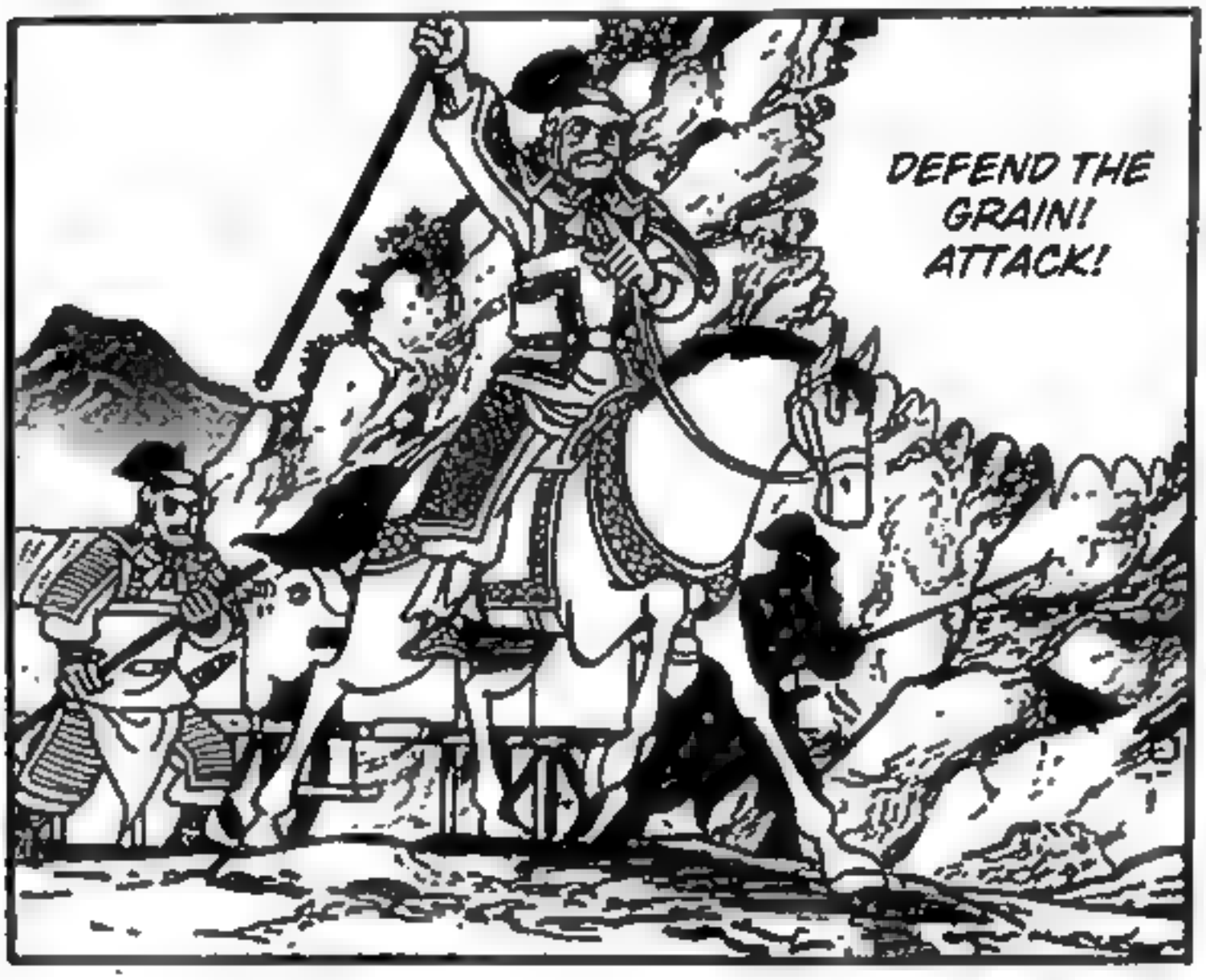
HM?

LOOK!

ATTACK!

LET'S SEIZE THEIR GRAIN!
IT'S AN ENEMY SUPPLY TRAIN!


DEFEND THE GRAIN! ATTACK!

WE! TROOPS!?

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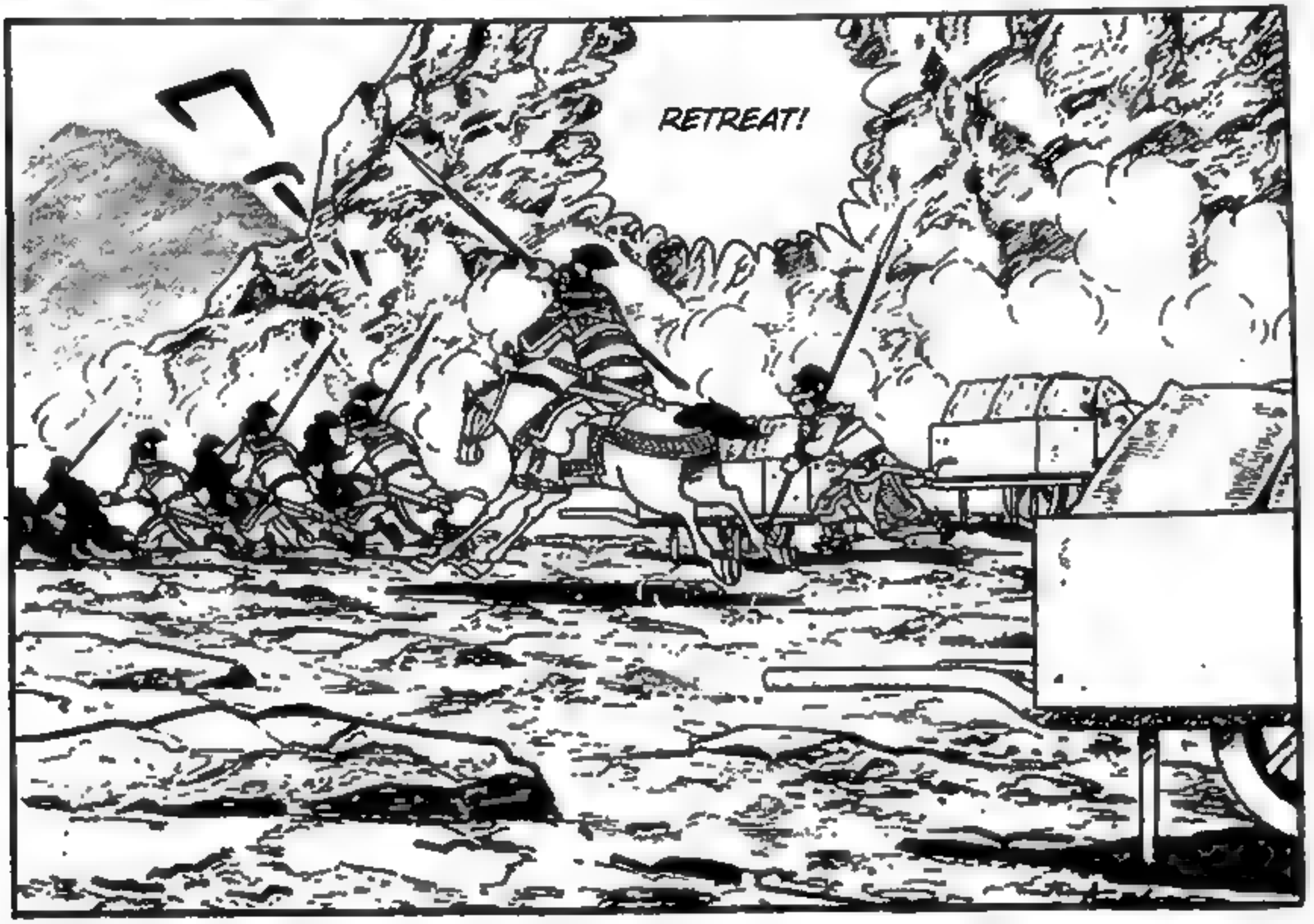
CURSES! ABANDON SUPPLIES AND RETREAT!

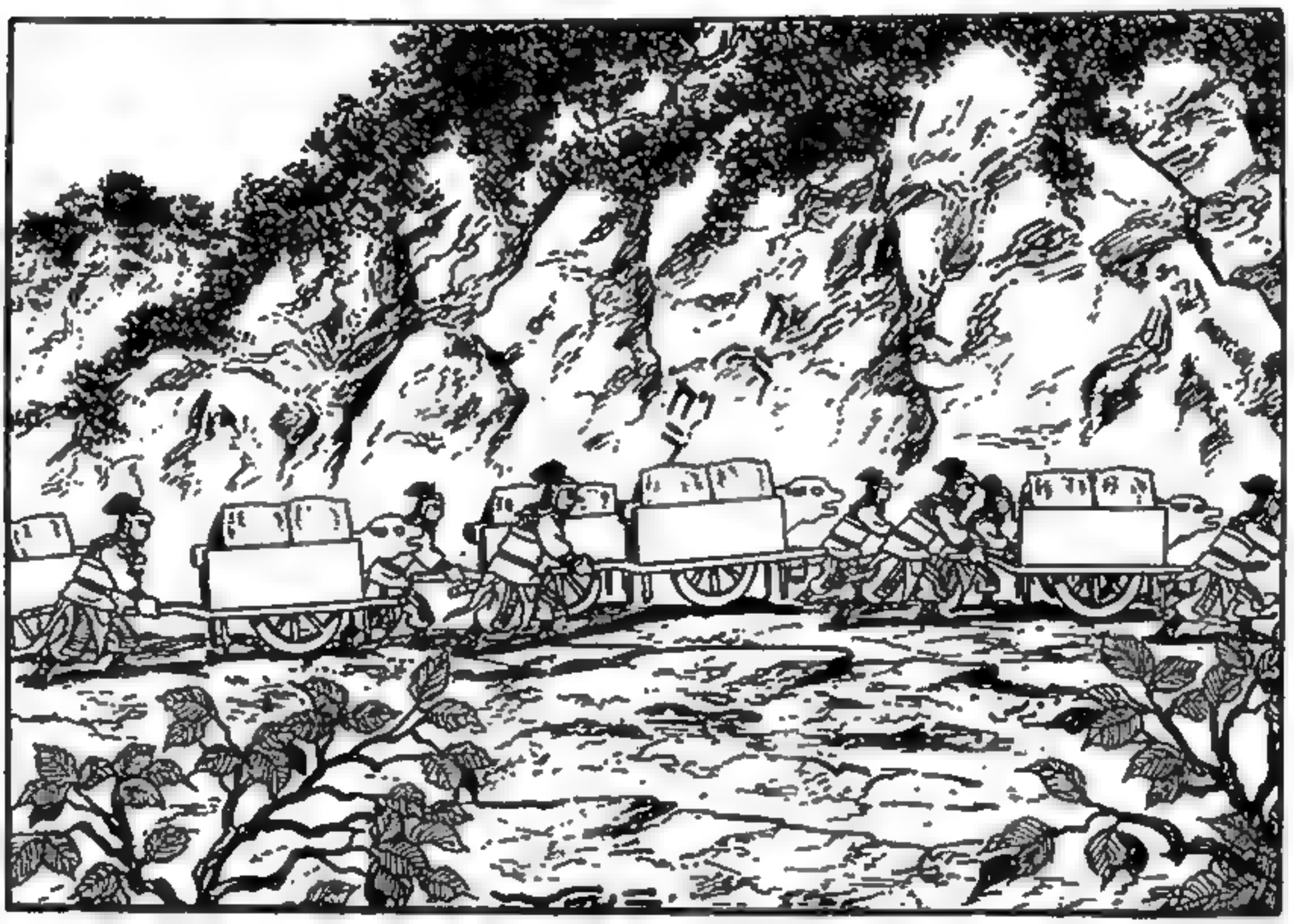
THERE'S TOO MANY OF THEM, SIR! WE CAN'T HOLD THEM OFF!


RETREAT!

NOTHING WORTH CELEBRATING TOO MUCH OVER, BUT THIS BODES WELL.

HAHAHA, LOOK AT'EM RUN!

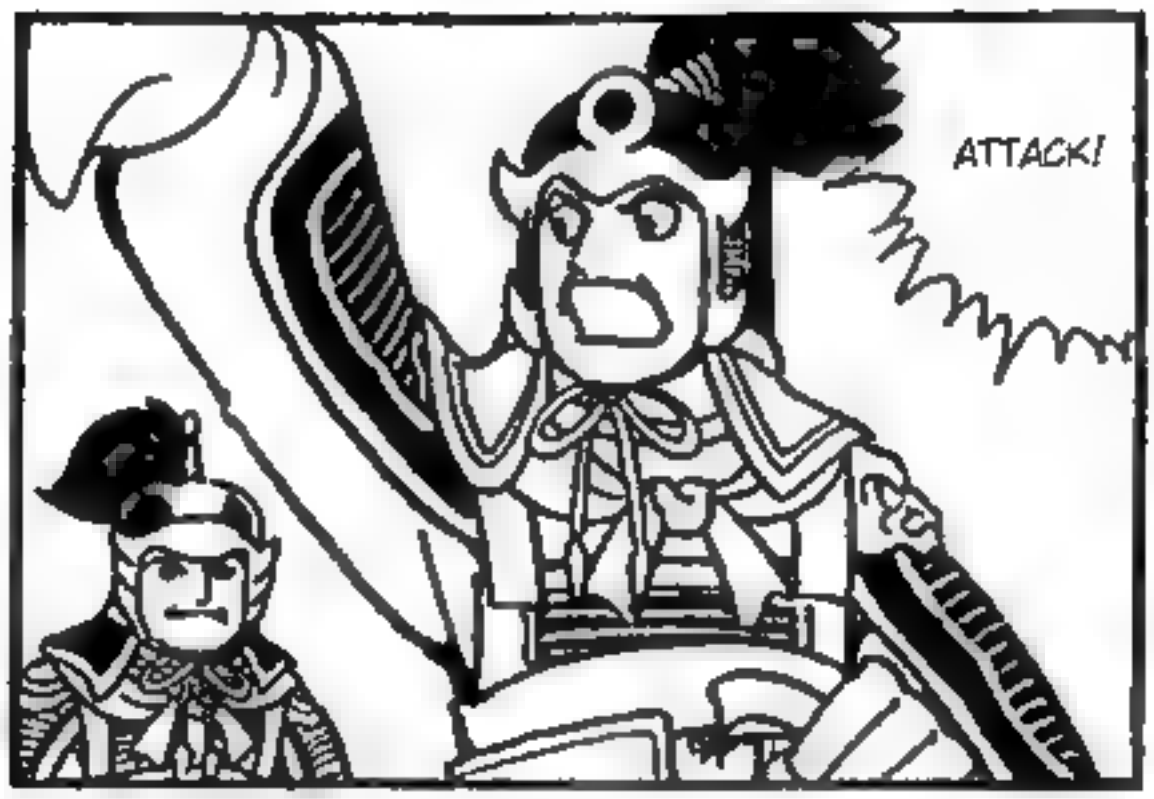
YES, SIR.
LET'S BRING THESE GRAIN BACK TO THE COMMANDER!



THE NEXT DAY

HM?

SHU TROOPS!


ATTACK!

LET'S RUN OVER THEM THEN.
IT'S JUST A SMALL COMPANY.

AHH!

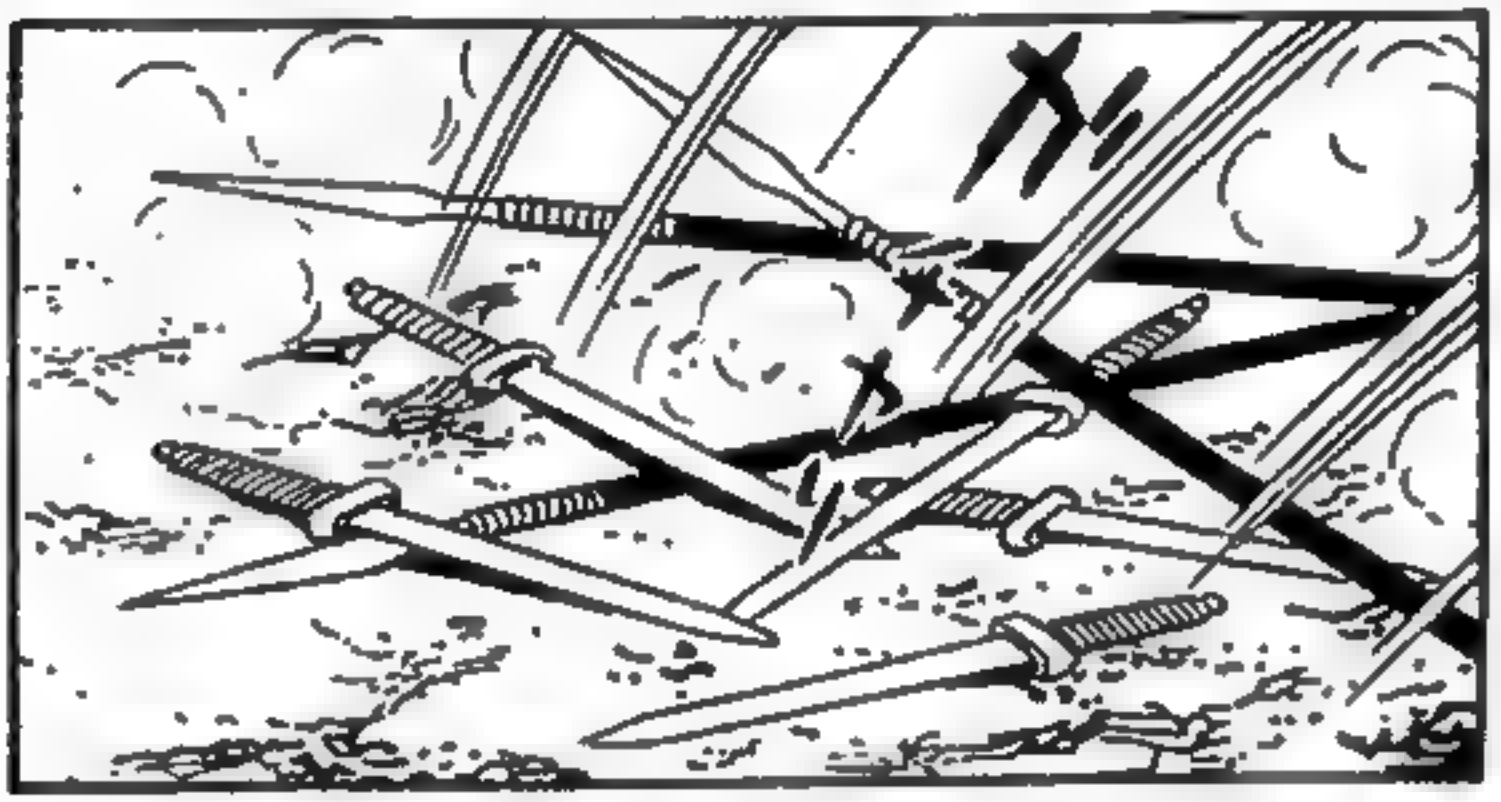
WEI TROOPS!?

AGHHHH!

O...
OKAY...

GULP!

LAY DOWN YOUR ARMS AND WE'LL SPARE YOUR LIVES!



YES.
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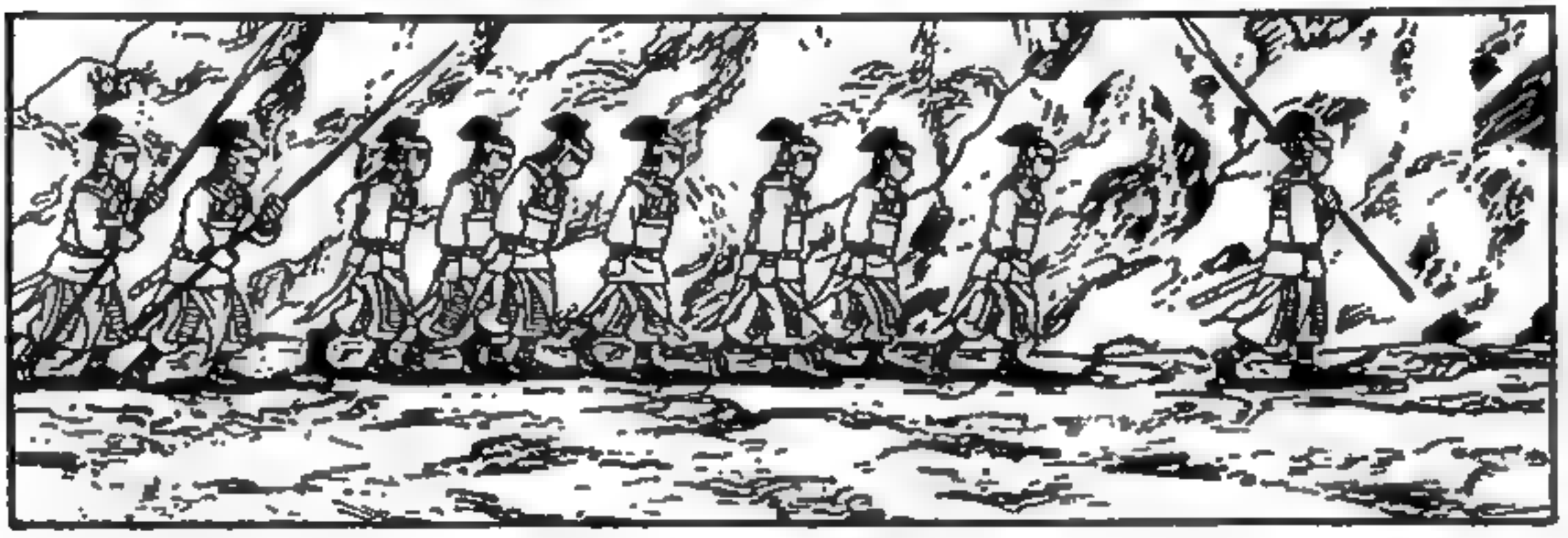
LET'S TAKE THESE PRISONERS BACK TO THE COMMANDER AS WELL.

HA, JUST LOOK AT THEIR LACK OF DISCIPLINE.



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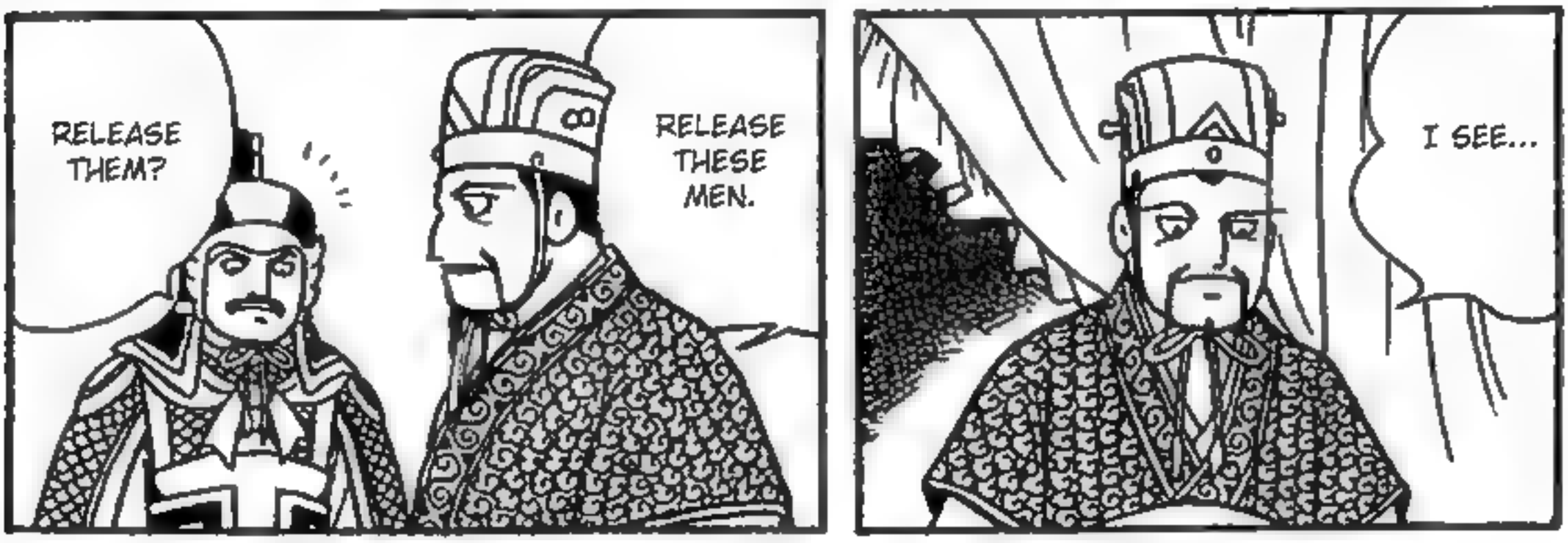
OUR CHANCELLOR SAID THERE WOULDN'T BE ANY FIGHTING FOR A WHILE, SO HE DISPERSED MUCH OF OUR TROOPS TO FARM AS MUCH LAND AS POSSIBLE, SIR...
WHAT WAS SUCH A SMALL COMPANY LIKE YOU DOING IN QISHAN ALONE?


RELEASE THEM?
RELEASE THESE MEN.
I SEE...

IN THE PAST, LU MENG OF WU SPARED THE SHU TROOPS IN JINGZHOU TO WIN OVER ITS RESIDENTS, WHO FORMED THE BULK OF GUAN YU'S ARMY. I WILL FOLLOW HIS EXAMPLE.

THEY'RE ONLY A SMALL COMPANY OF FOOTSOLDIERS. WHAT BENEFIT IS THERE IN KILLING THEM?

T-THANK YOU, SIR!
BY THE BENEVOLENCE OF COMMANDER SIMA YI, YOU ARE FREE TO RETURN TO QISHAN. TELL YOUR COMRADES THAT THOSE WHO SURRENDER IN THE WILL BE SPARED.

IT IS UNFAIR TO ONLY LET XIAHOU BA AND WEI ATTACK. PLEASE GRANT US OTHER OFFICERS A CHANCE TO RENDER SERVICE AND EARN MERIT.

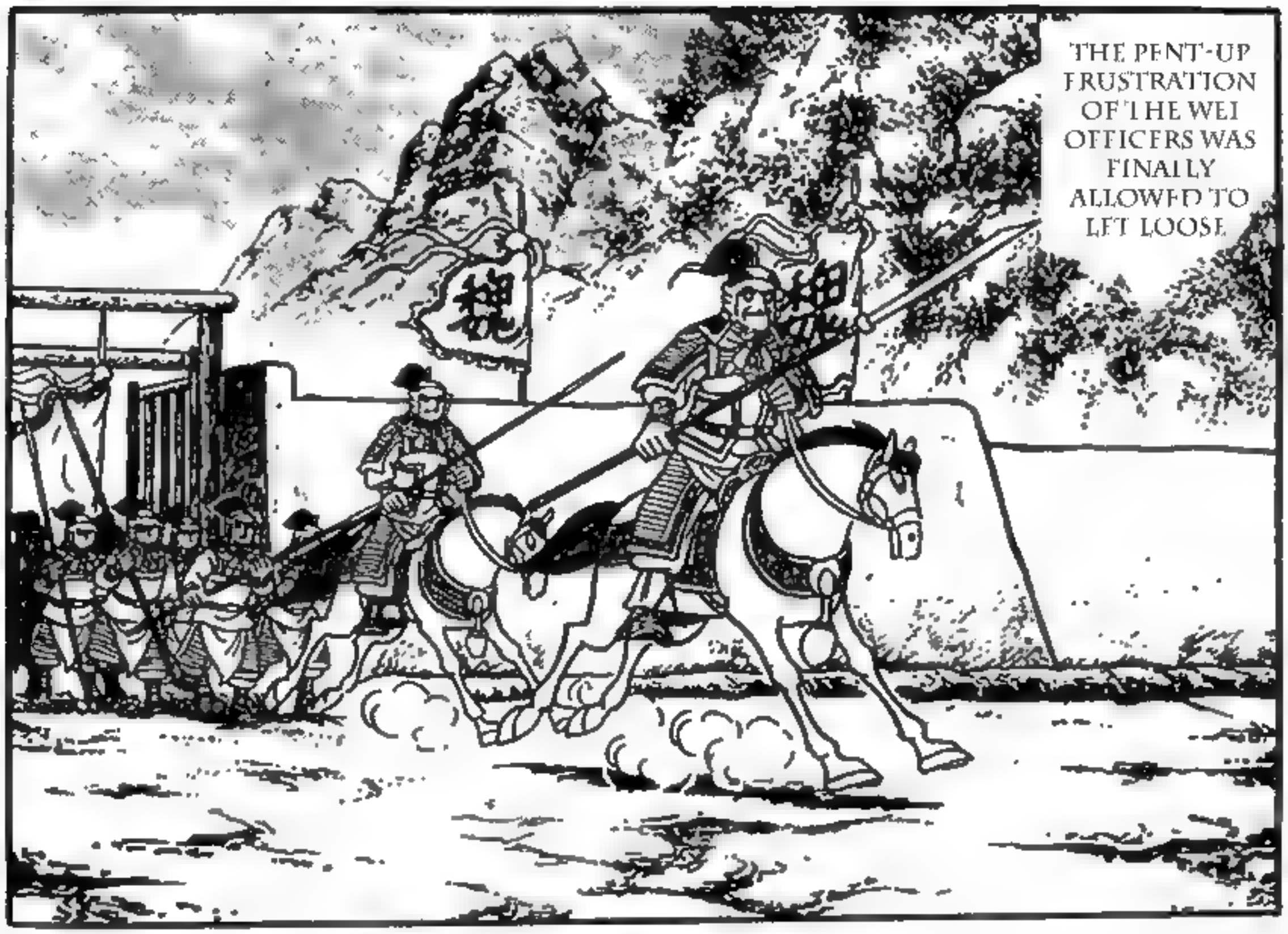
YES?

COMMANDER.

IF XIAHOU BA AND WEI'S ATTACKS HAVE PROVED ANYTHING, IT'S THAT THE ENEMIES ARE INDEED WEAK AND SCATTERED RIGHT NOW. PLEASE GIVE US THE CHANCE TO EXPLOIT THIS OPPORTUNITY AS WELL.

THANK YOU!

VERY WELL, I CONSENT.


THE PENT-UP FRUSTRATION OF THE WEI OFFICERS WAS FINALLY ALLOWED TO LET LOOSE

THEY SWIFTLY DEFEATED AND CAPTURED ANY SMALL BODY OF TROOPS THEY ENCOUNTERED
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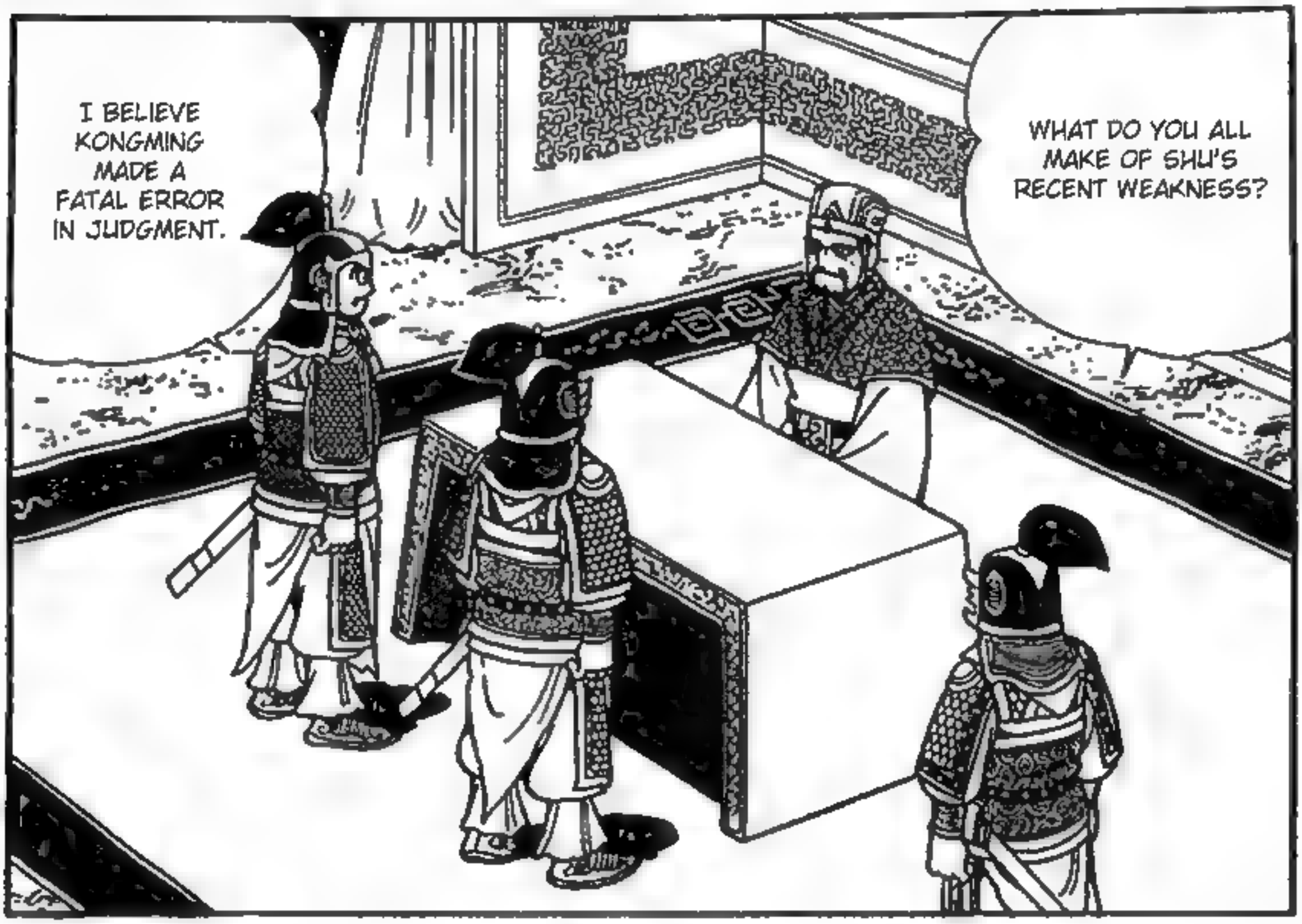
FOR HALF A MONTH, THESE RAIDS INTO ENEMY HELD TERRITORIES OF QISHAN CONTINUED, WITH WEI WINNING EACH AND EVERY ENGAGEMENT


I BELIEVE KONGMING MADE A FATAL ERROR IN JUDGMENT.
WHAT DO YOU ALL MAKE OF SHU'S RECENT WEAKNESS?

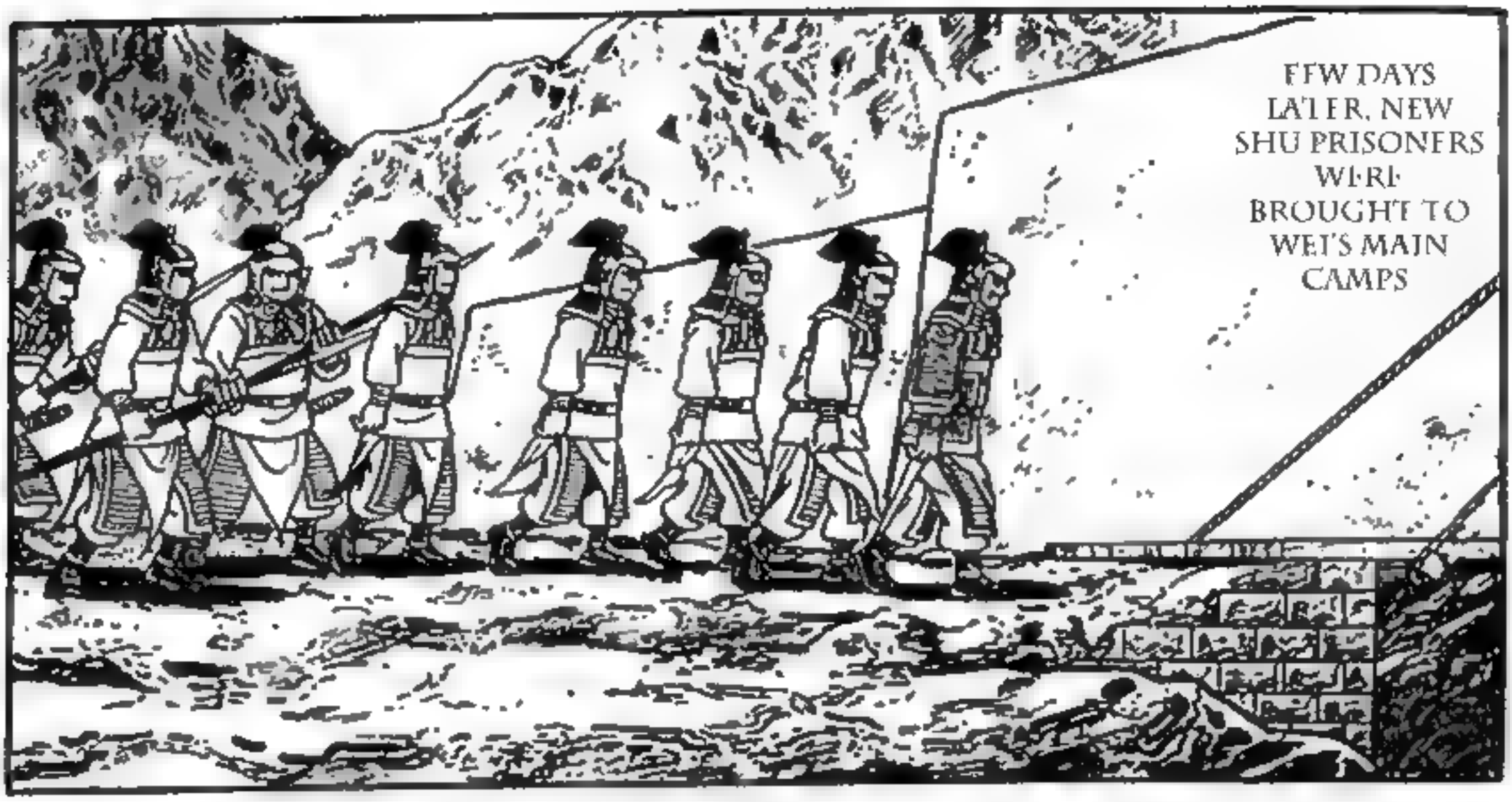
HE MISTAKENLY CONCLUDED WE WOULD NOT ENGAGE IN ANY OFFENSIVE ACTION.

EXPLAIN FURTHER.

IF WE WERE TO MOUNT AN ALL-OUT ATTACK ON QISHAN, I'M CONFIDENT WE CAN SWEEP AWAY THE ENEMIES FOR GOOD!

THUS, HE PREMATURELY SWITCHED TO PREPARING FOR A DRAWN OUT CAMPAIGN BY DISPERSING HIS TROOPS TO TILL THE LANDS FOR GRAIN.

TRUE, ALL SIGNS POINT TO THAT CONCLUSION... BUT THE PROBLEM IS KONGMING. THE ENEMIES CAN'T BE TRULY DEFEATED WITHOUT US DEALING WITH KONGMING AS WELL. WHERE EXACTLY IS HE AT THE MOMENT AND WHAT IS HE UP TO?


FEW DAYS LATER, NEW SHU PRISONERS WERE BROUGHT TO WEI'S MAIN CAMPS

YES...
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ARE YOU THE CAPTAIN?

YES, SIR...

ANSWER TRUTHFULLY AND I WILL LET YOU AND YOUR MEN RETURN ALIVE.

WELL...

WHERE IS KONGMING?

HE IS AT A PLACE CALLED GOURD VALLEY, LOCATED ROUGHLY 10 LI TO THE WEST OF QISHAN.

Y-YES, SIR.

KEEP IN MIND THAT THE LIVES OF YOUR MEN REST UPON YOUR RESPONSE.

HE IS OVERSEEING THE COMPLETION OF A FORT AND THE STORAGE OF ENOUGH GRAIN THERE TO SUPPORT ALL OUR TROOPS OUT HERE.

AND WHAT IS HE DOING THERE?

LET THEM GO.

AHH, SO HE IS TRYING TO MAKE A NEW STAGING POINT TO PERMANENTLY THREATEN WEI FROM.

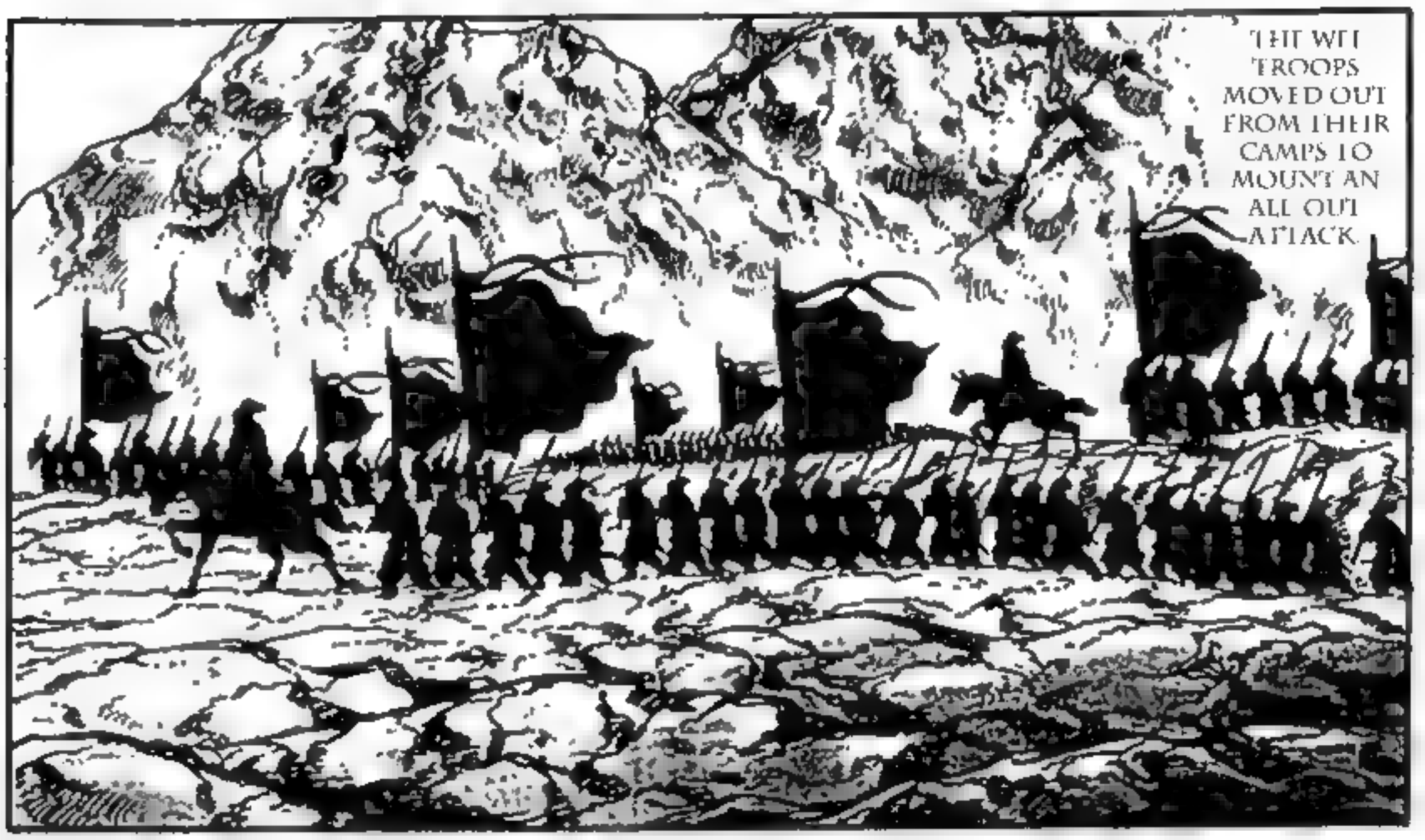
YES, WHO KNOWS HOW HARD DRIVING THEM OFF WILL BE ONCE KONGMING'S IDEAL FORT IS COMPLETE?

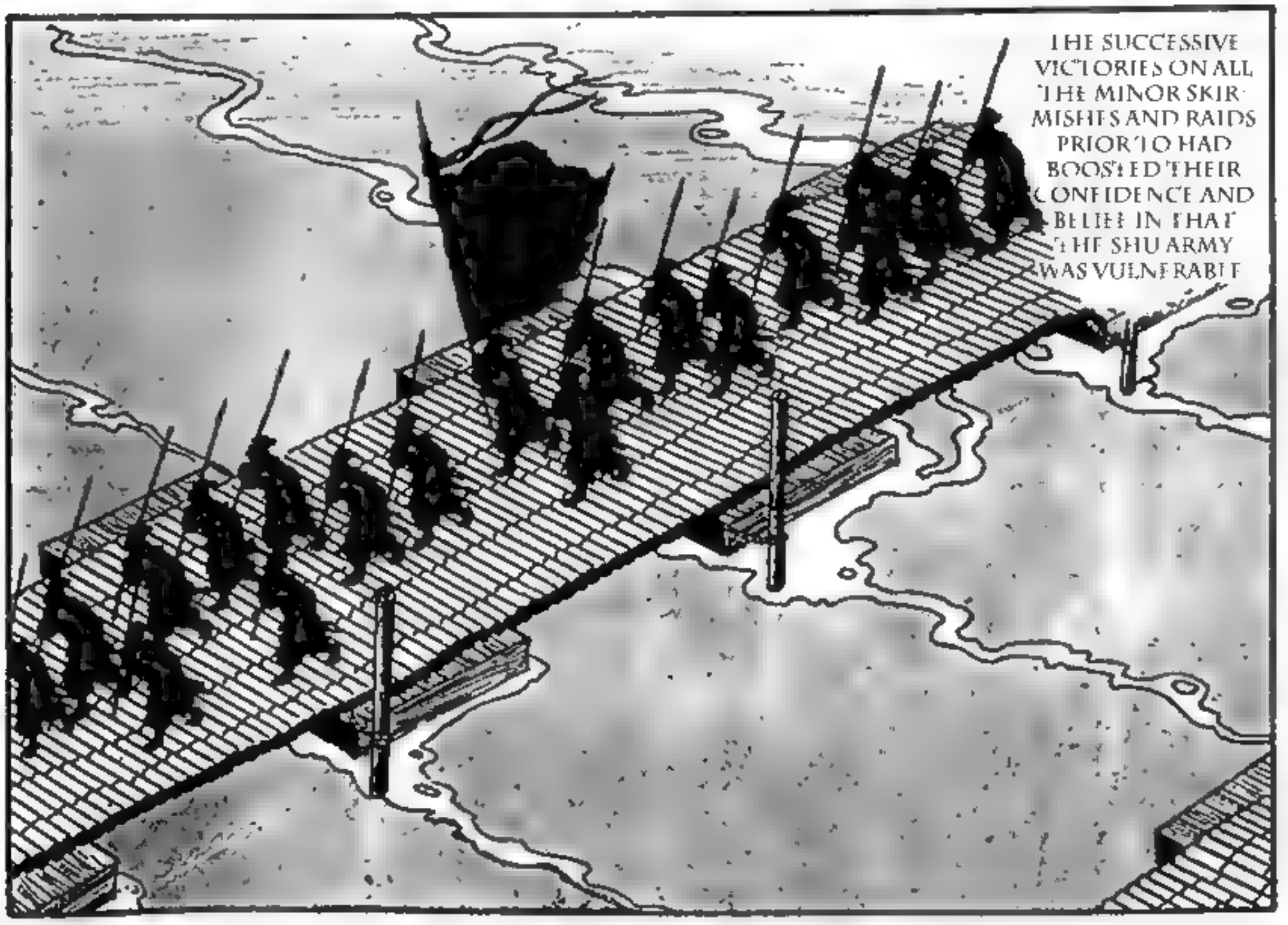
IT'S JUST AS WE FEARED, FATHER. WE MUST DRIVE AWAY THE ENEMIES BEFORE THE CONSTRUCTION OF THIS NEW FORT IS COMPLETE.

SPLENDID.

I AGREE, AND I HEREBY ORDER A FULL-SCALE ATTACK!

FIRE AND WATER




THE SUCCESSIVE VICTORIES ON ALL THE MINOR SKIR MISHES AND RAIDS PRIOR TO HAD BOOSTED THEIR CONFIDENCE AND BELIEF IN THAT THE SHU ARMY WAS VULNERABLE

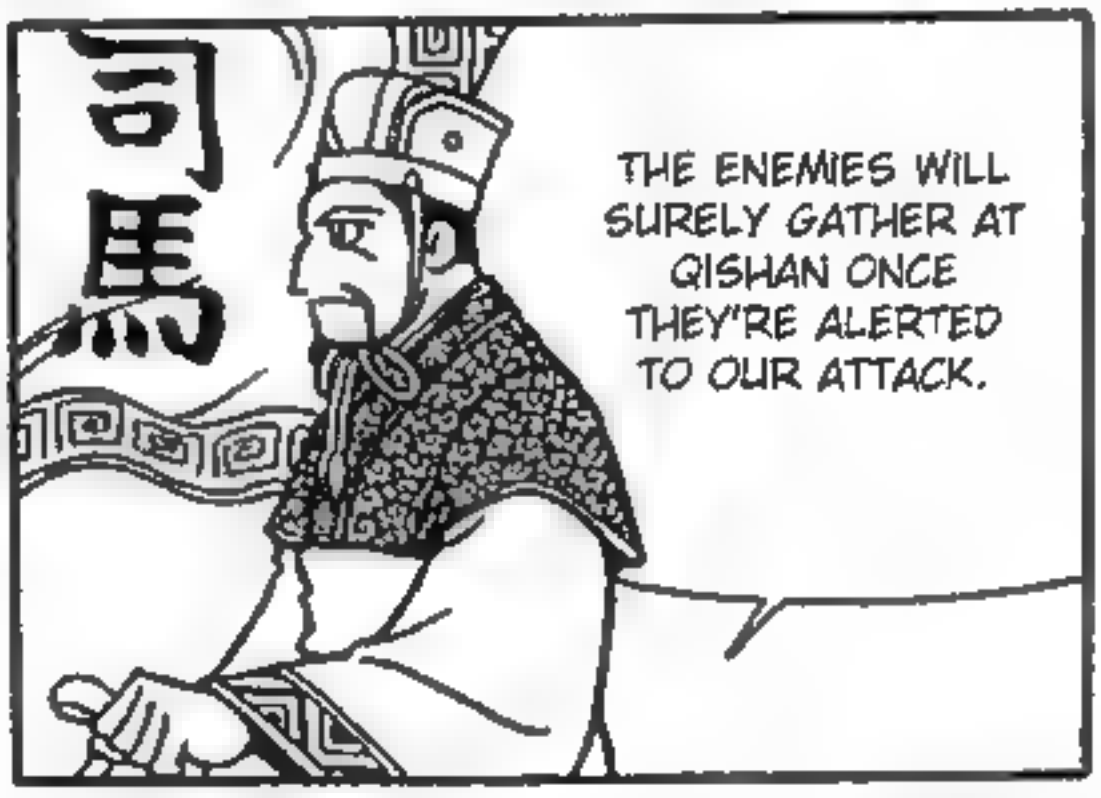
BECAUSE THE ENEMY'S MAIN CAMP IS STILL AT QISHAN.
FATHER, WHY ARE WE ATTACKING QISHAN WHEN KONGMING IS IN GOURD VALLEY?

THE MEANING?

HAHAHA. HAVE YOU NOT FIGURED OUT THE MEANING BEHIND MY LEADING OF THE RESERVES?

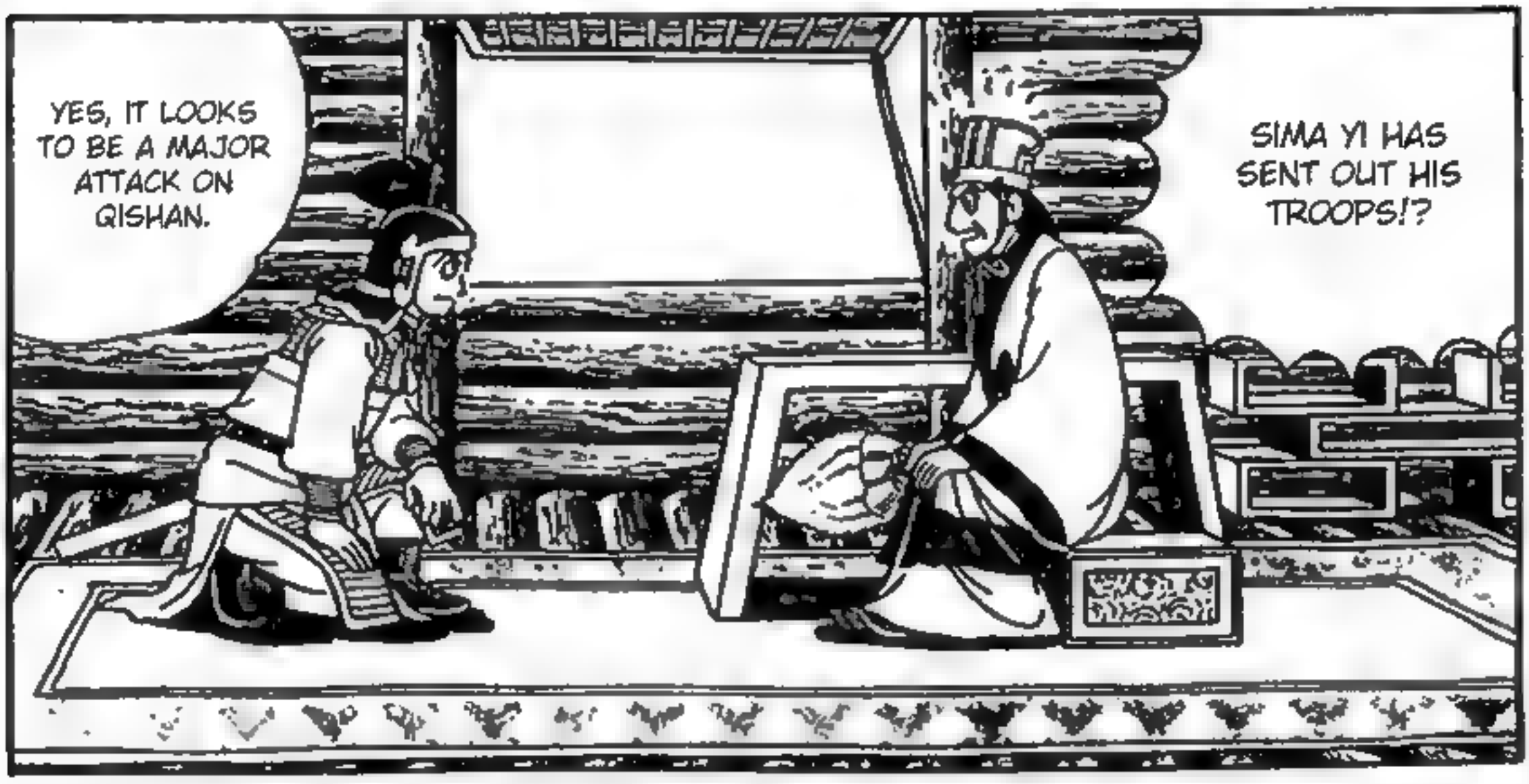
BUT DID YOU NOT SAY YOURSELF KONGMING MUST BE DEALT WITH IF THE ENEMIES ARE TO BE REALLY DEFEATED?

ONCE THEY DO, I WILL SNEAK OFF TO GOURD VALLEY WITH OUR RESERVES.


THE ENEMIES WILL SURELY GATHER AT QISHAN ONCE THEY'RE ALERTED TO OUR ATTACK.

YES, FATHER.
THIS IS TOP SECRET SO LET'S SPEAK NO MORE OF THIS, SHI.

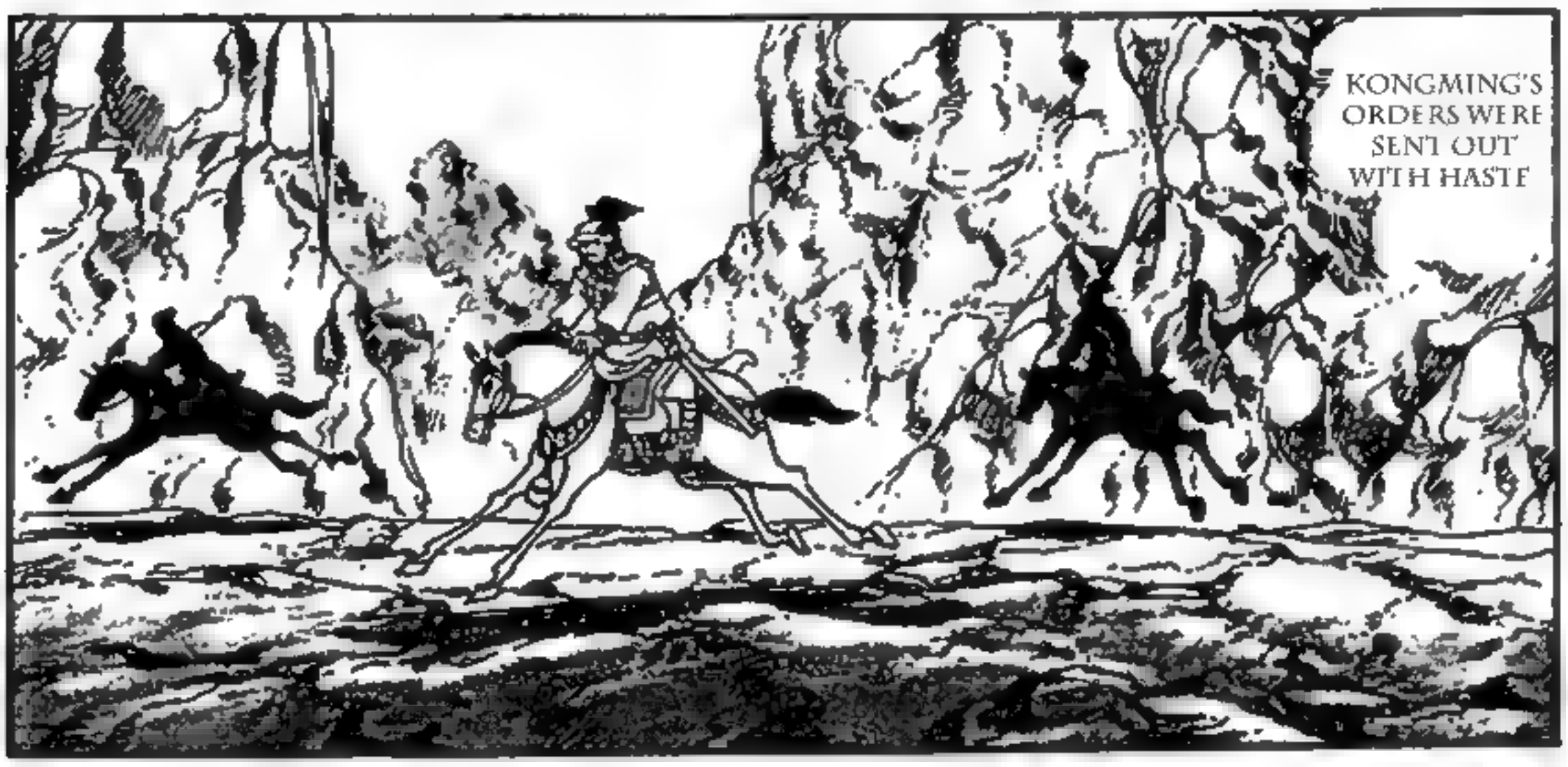
GOURD
VALLEY


YES, IT LOOKS TO BE A MAJOR ATTACK ON QISHAN.
SIMA YI HAS SENT OUT HIS TROOPS!?

SEND THIS ORDER OUT TO ALL OFFICERS AT ONCE.

AT LONG LAST, I'VE FINALLY COAXED SIMA YI OUT FROM HIS SHELL.

YES, SIR.
TELL THEM NOT TO BEAT BACK THE ENEMY ATTACK ON QISHAN. INSTEAD, HAVE THEM ATTACK THE ENEMY'S CAMP AT THE SOUTHERN RIVERBANK TO CUT OFF SIMA YI'S RETREAT ROUTE.

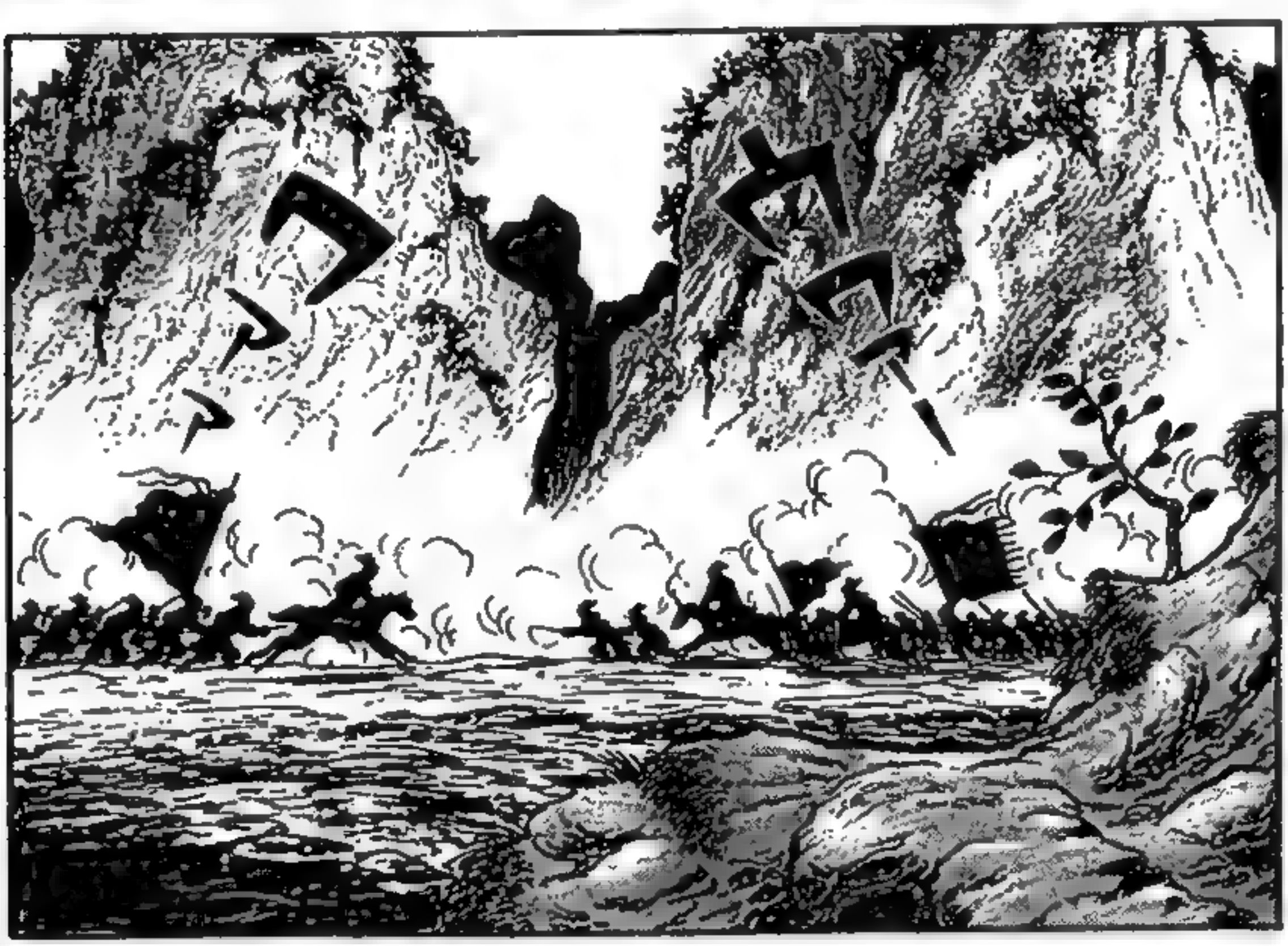

KONGMING'S ORDERS WERE SENT OUT WITH HASTE

TODAY WILL BE THE DAY WE DRIVE OUT THE SHU FOR GOOD AND ENSURE THEY NEVER THREATEN WEI AGAIN!

ATTACK!

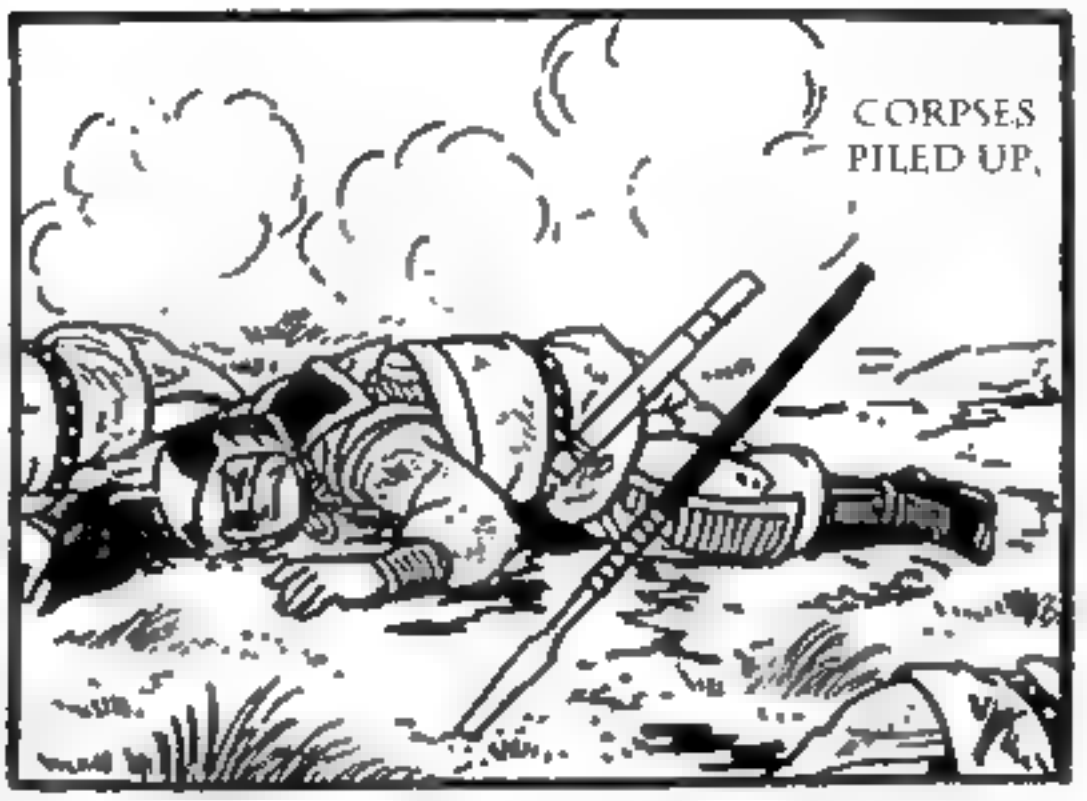
THE FATE OF SHU HANGS ON OUR PER-FORMANCE TODAY!

HERE COMES THE WEI ATTACK!



THE GROUND SHOOK WITH THE THUNDER-OUS CHARGE OF BOTH SIDES
BOTH SIDES FOUGHT WITH THE INTENT TO MAKE THIS THEIR LAST BATTLE

AND THE GROUND WAS COVERED WITH BLOOD


CORPSES PILED UP.

AS THE HOURS PASSED IT WAS EVIDENT THAT SHU WAS GIVING GROUND AND BEING PUSHED BACK

YES, AND NOW THAT WE'VE GIVEN ENOUGH TIME FOR THE ENEMY FORCES TO GATHER HERE, GOURD VALLEY WILL BE ONLY LIGHTLY DEFENDED.
OUR SUPERIOR TROOPS ARE PUSHING THE ENMIES BACK, FATHER!

RESERVES! WE WILL NOW MAKE HASTE TO GOURD VALLEY!
SIMA YI LEFT THE BATTLE UNFOLDING AT QISHAN TO DEAL WITH KONGMING AT GOURD VALLEY

TRUE TO SIMA YI'S PREDICTIONS, GOURD VALLEY WAS ONLY LIGHTLY GUARDED WITH A COUPLE HUNDRED TROOPS

THEY WERE QUICKLY RUN OVER BY THE MUCH LARGER WEI FORCES

WEI YAN!

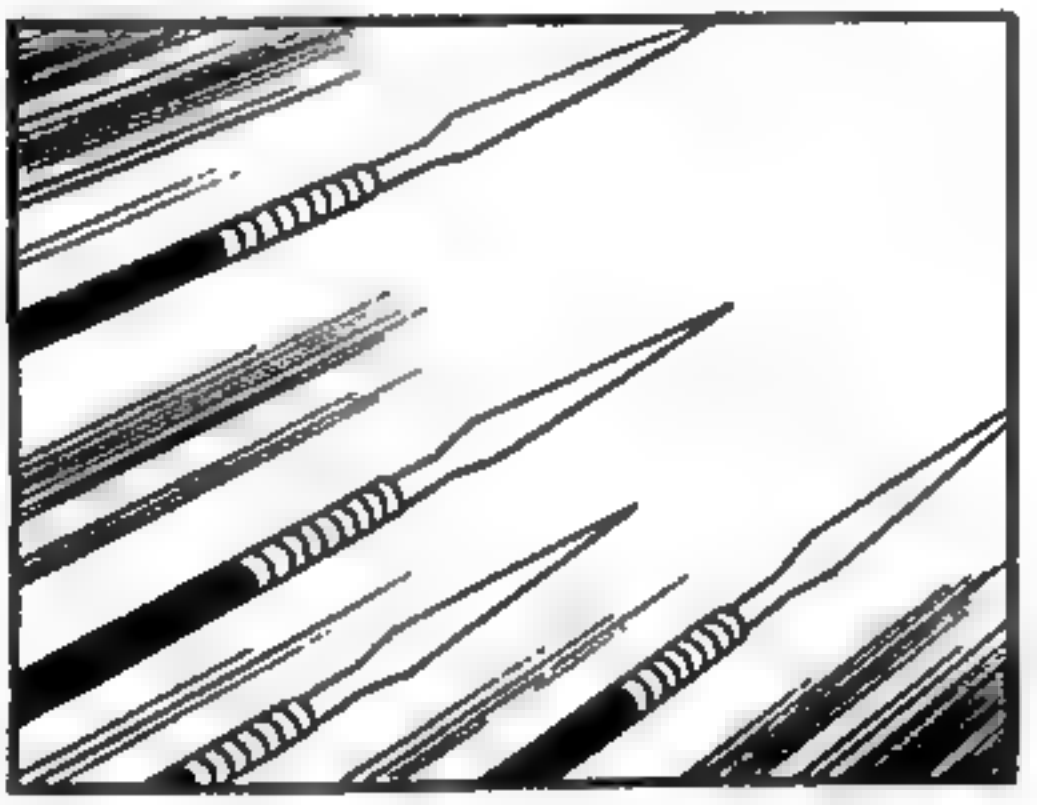
HOLD IT, SIMA YI! YOU WON'T GET PAST HERE AS LONG AS THE FIERCEST GENERAL IN SHU STANDS HIS GROUND!

DON'T FALTER! HIS TROOPS ARE FEW!

IF IT'S A SWIFT DEATH YOU WANT, THEN I'LL GLADLY GIVE IT!

DON'T LET A SINGLE GENERAL HOLD UP OUR ENTIRE FORCE! FIGHT BACK!

NGHH!

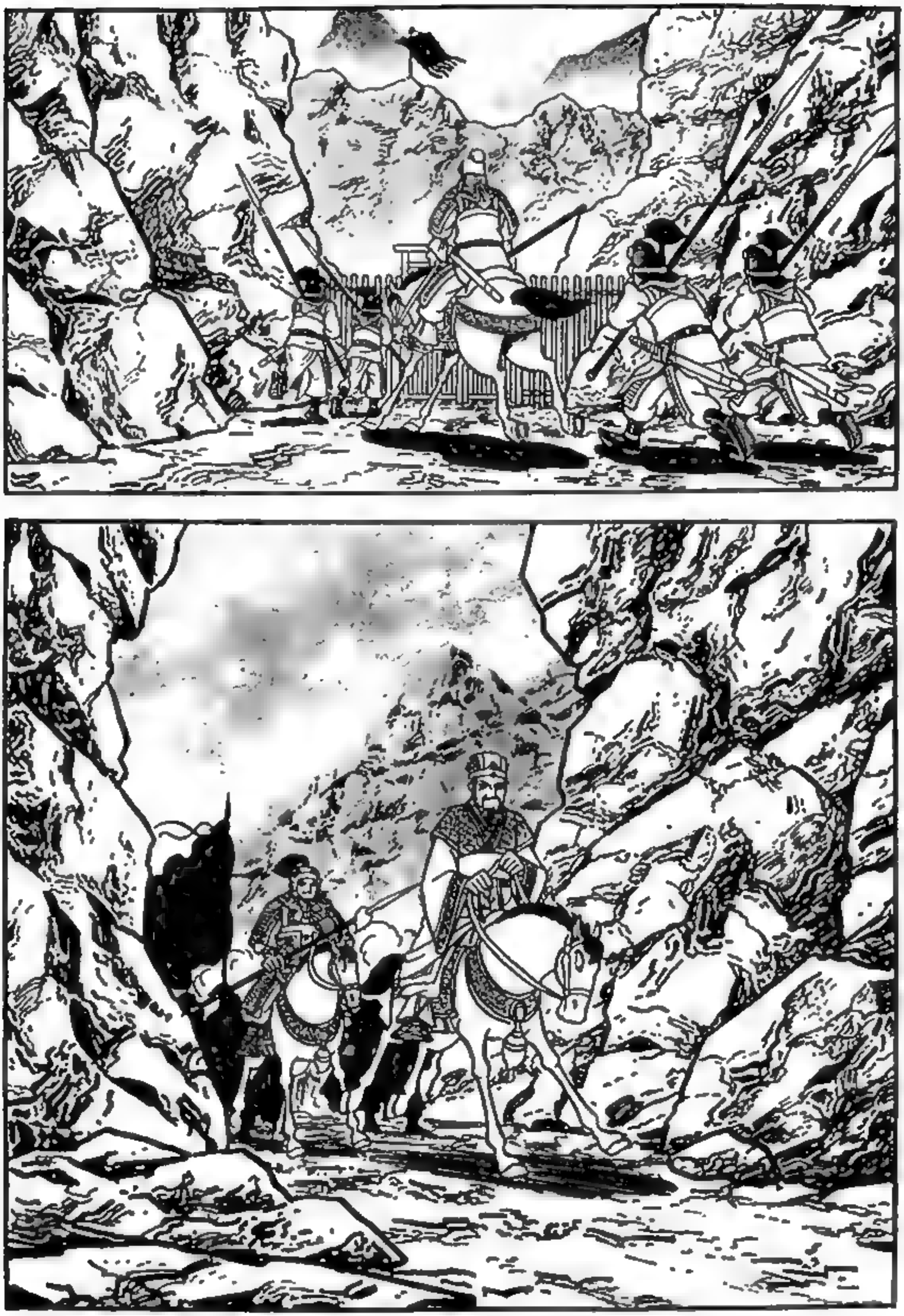


THERE'S TOO MANY OF'EM! WITHDRAW!

AFTER THEM! WHOEVER TAKES WEI YAN'S HEAD WILL BE GREATLY REWARDED!

司馬

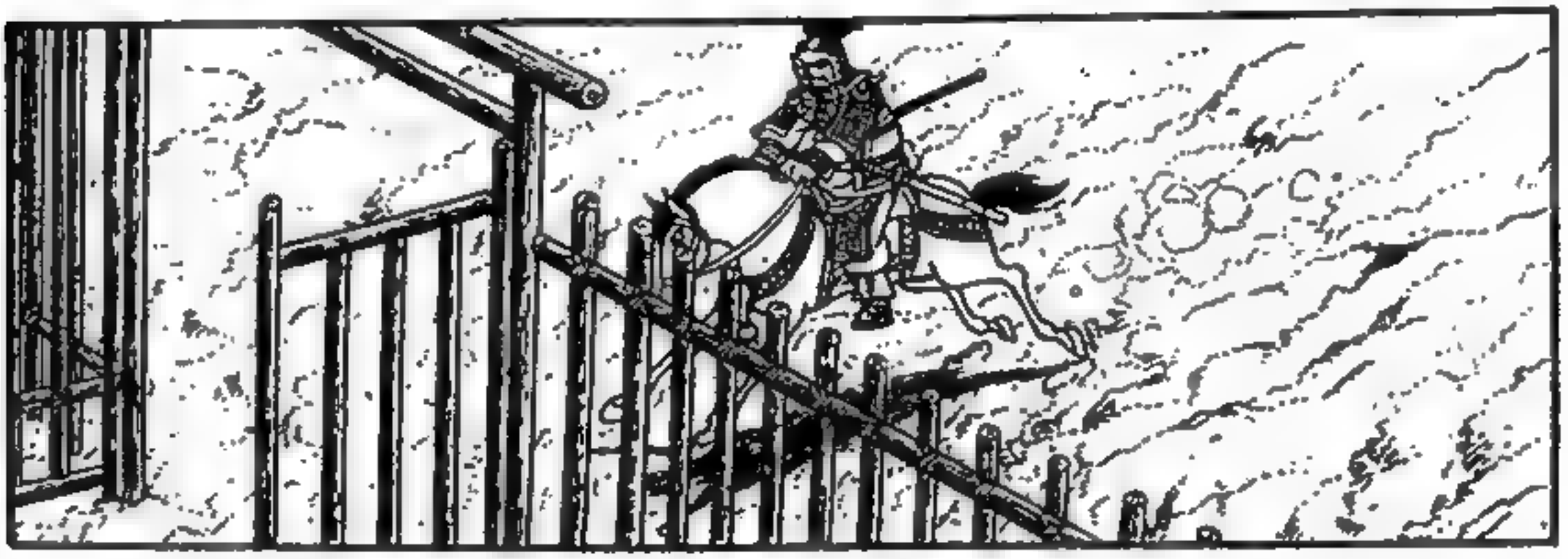
OVER THERE! HEAD TOWARDS THAT BANNER!



HALT! THE LAY OF THIS LAND SEEMS DANGEROUS!

HM?

YES, SIR.
SCOUT AHEAD AND REPORT WHAT YOU FIND.



LOOKS LIKE THEY FLED IN PANIC...

IS THAT SO?
COMMANDER, IT LOOKS LIKE THE ENEMIES HAVE ABANDONED THEIR NEWLY BUILT CAMP AT GOURD VALLEY IN PANIC. THEY'VE LEFT BEHIND STORAGES FULL OF GRAIN, ARMS, AND ARMOUR.
THEN WE'LL BURN THE GRAIN THEY WORKED SO HARD TO STORE!

AH!?

DO YOU REALLY THINK YOU CAN WIN AGAINST ME WITH JUST A FEW HUNDRED TROOPS?

YOU'RE STILL HERE, WEI YAN!?

HM!?

AHH! OH NO!

THAT'S ODD. WHY WOULD THERE BE KINDLING PILED RIGHT NEXT TO THE STORAGES? SHOULDN'T THEY NORMALLY BE KEPT FAR AWAY...?

SHOULDN'T WE CHASE THEM OFF AND THEN BURN DOWN THIS CAMP TO RUIN KONGMING'S PLANS?

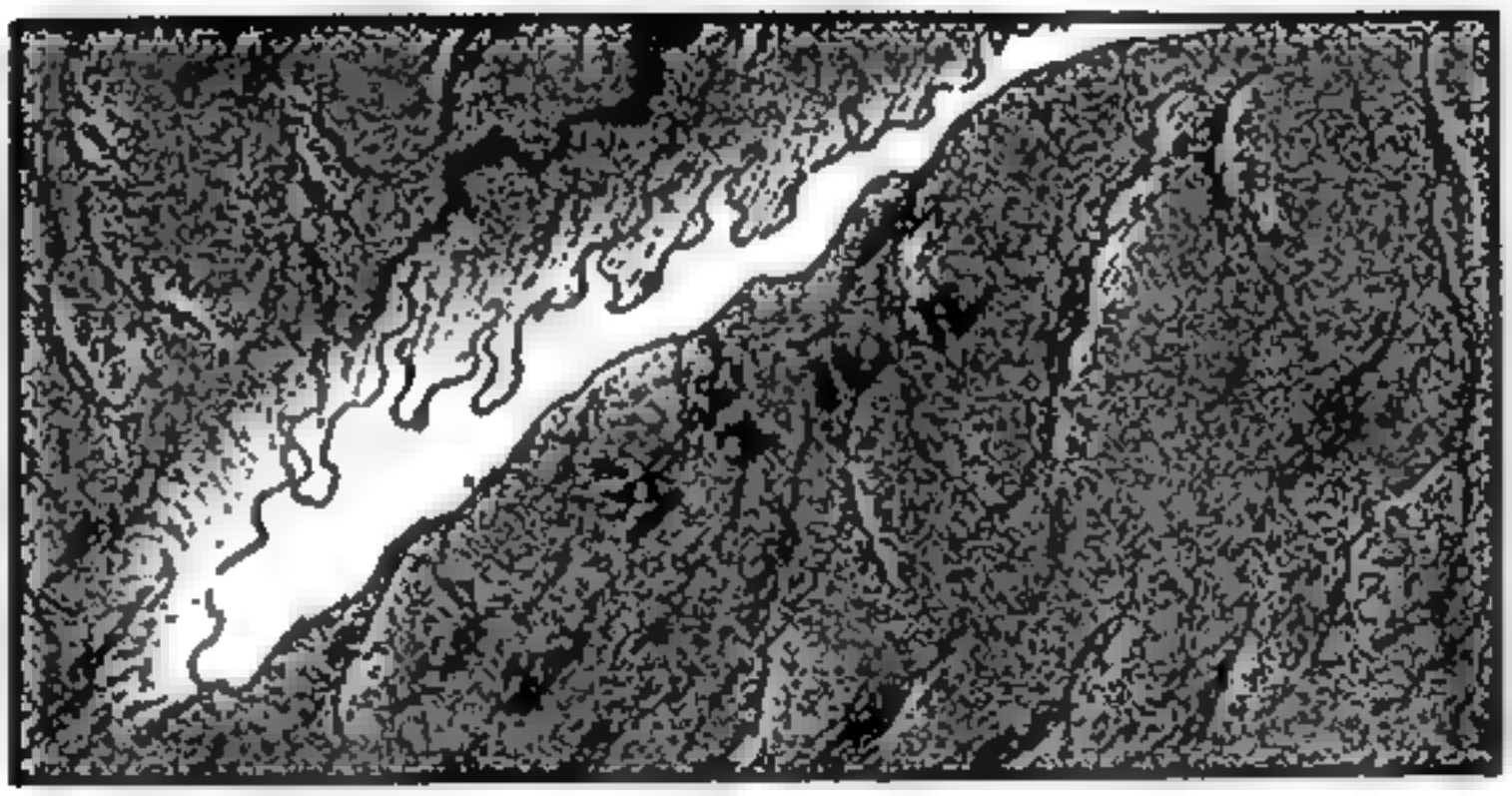
FATHER? BUT THERE'S ONLY WEI YAN AND A FEW HUNDRED SHU SOLDIERS?

RETREAT! RETREAT!

YOU FOOL! DO YOU NOT SEE THE KINDLING PILED IN THIS CAMP!? WHAT DO YOU SUPPOSE WILL HAPPEN IF OUR EXIT WAS SUDDENLY BLOCKED!?

I SAID TURN BACK, YOU FOOLS!
TURN AROUND! TURN AROUND!

SIMA YI'S SHOUTS WERE FUTILE AS THE TROOPS ALL THE WAY BACK WERE STILL RUSHING IN TO GOURD VALLEY



HM?

NOBODY, FATHER! THE FIRE JUST APPEARED OUT OF NOWHERE!

W-WHO GAVE THE ORDER TO START A FIRE!?

WE ARE NOW STUCK IN THIS VALLEY.

IT'S TOO LATE. OUR EXIT'S BEEN SEALED OFF...

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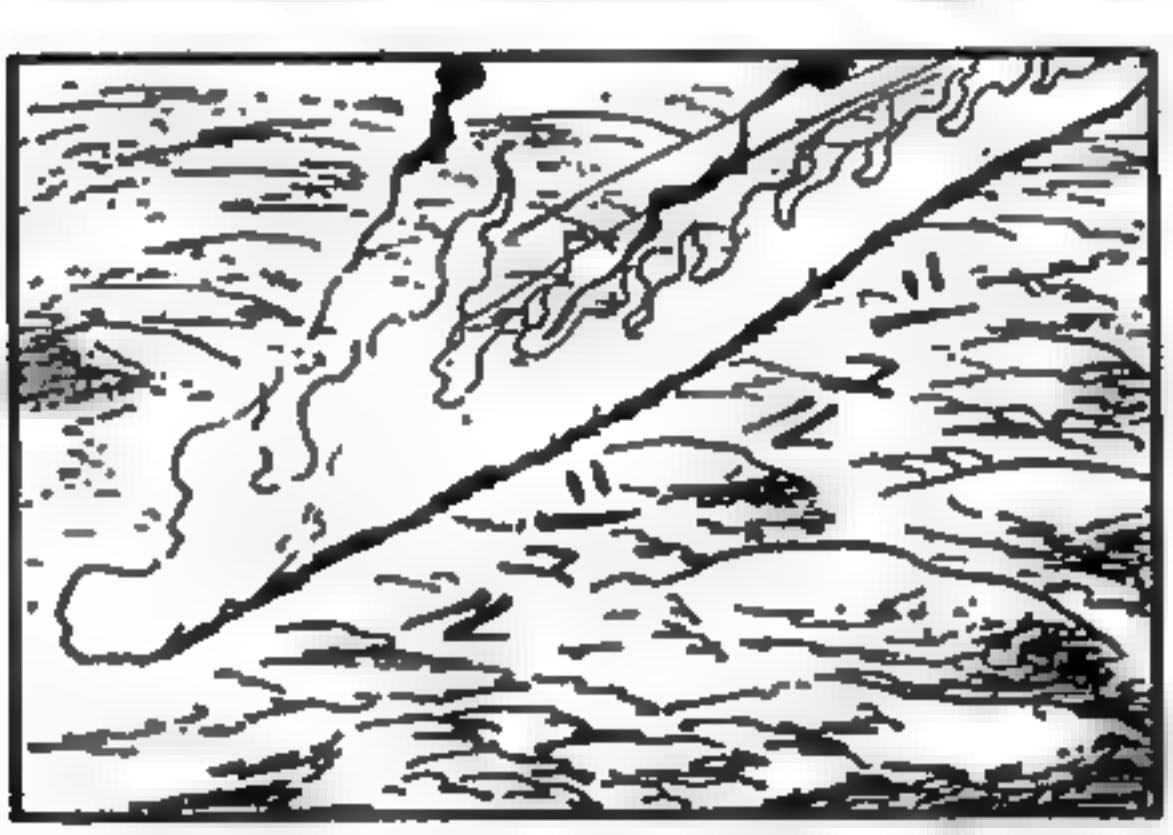


NO...!

AHH!

THE WEI ARMY WAS SURROUNDED BY A SEA OF FLAMES

HEY! YOU'VE SEALED OFF THE EXIT WITHOUT LETTING ME ESCAPE!

WHAT!?

I GET IT NOW! KONGMING'S BEEN PLANNING ALL ALONG TO GET RID OF ME ALONG WITH SIMA YI!

WHERE ARE YOU, YOU DESPICABLE COWARD!? YOU'RE LAUGHING AT ME FROM SOMEWHERE ABOVE, AREN'T YOU!?

MOVING OUT FROM OUR CAMPS WAS OUR GREATEST MISTAKE. WE WERE NEVER A MATCH FOR KONGMING...

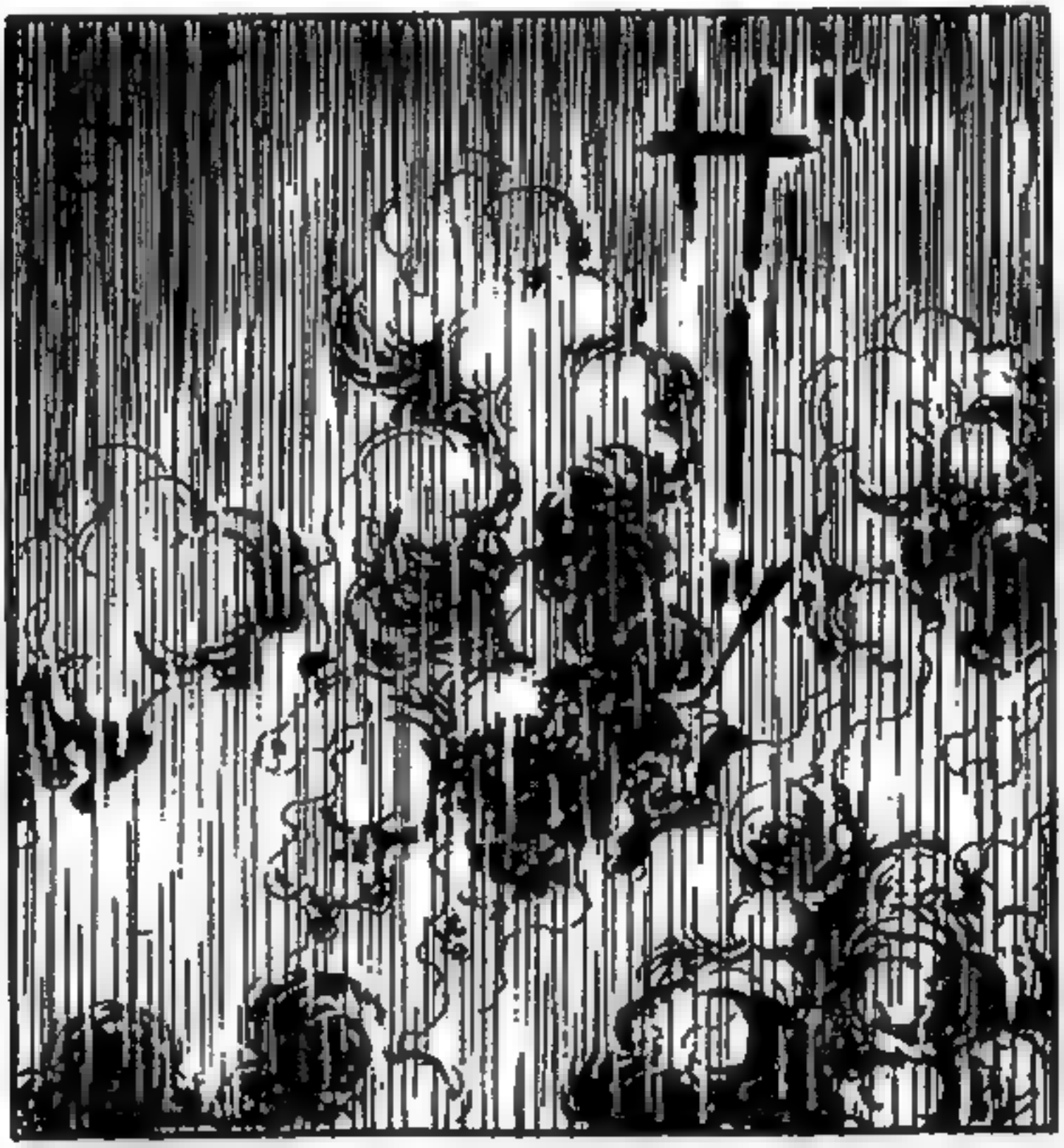
YES, WE ARE FINISHED, MY SON.
FATHER, THERE IS NO ESCAPE FROM THIS HELL.

LOOK!
HM?

OHH!

RAIN!

PLEASE
RAIN DOWN
HARDER!



RAIN! RAIN! GLORIOUS RAIN!

YES.

LET'S TRY TO FIND A WAY OUT NOW, FATHER!

YES, SIR!
SEND OUT ORDERS TO ALL UNITS TO WITHDRAW BACK TO CAMP!

THE ENTRANCE WAS SUDDENLY BLOCKED OFF!
COMMANDER! ARE YOU ALRIGHT!?

WHAT IS IT!?

COMMANDER!

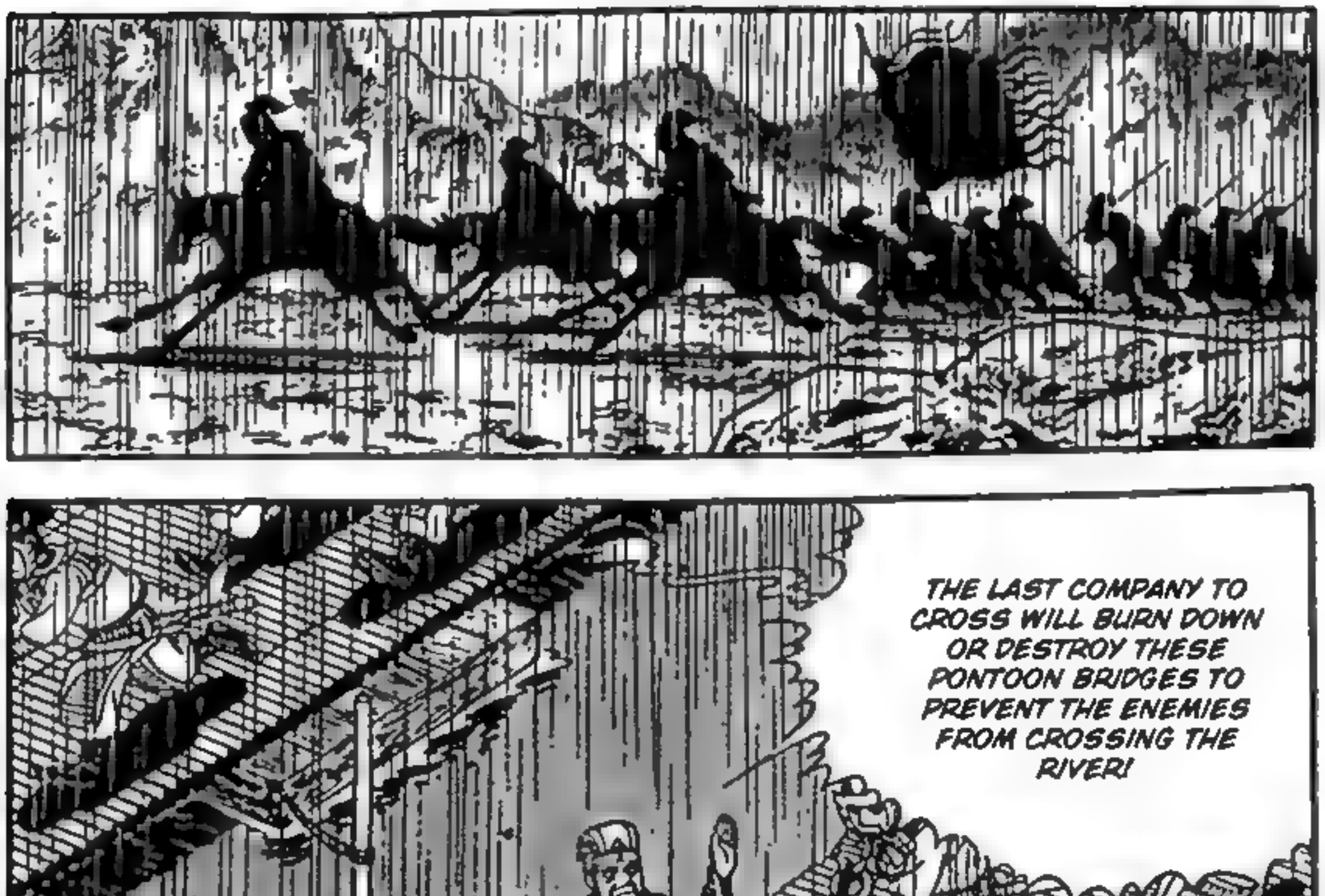
WHAT!? OUR CAMP IS LOST!?

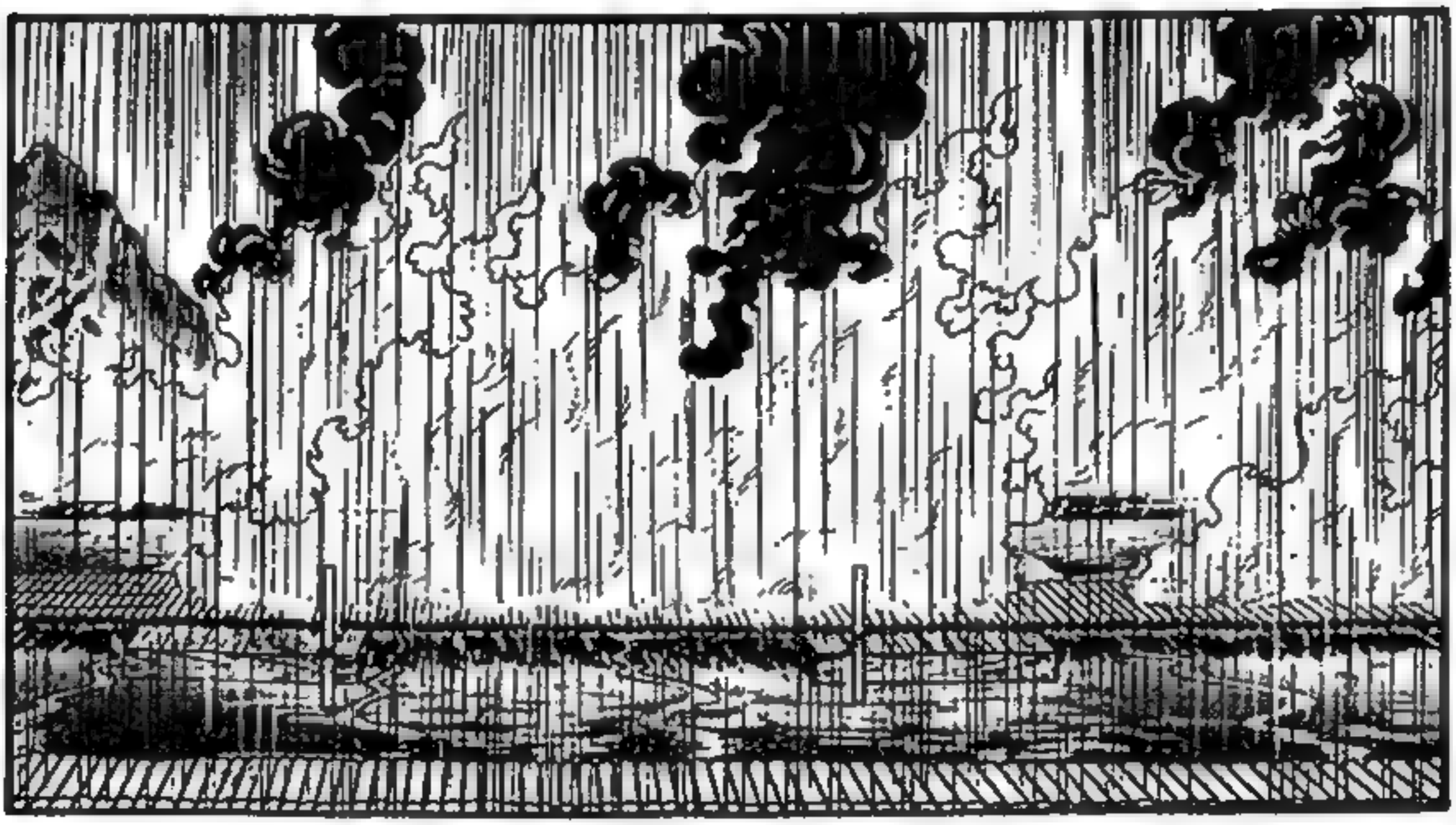
THE ENEMIES HAVE TAKEN OUR CAMP AT THE SOUTHERN RIVERBANK!

YES, SIR!

WE'LL WITHDRAW TO OUR CAMP AT THE NORTHERN RIVERBANK THEN!

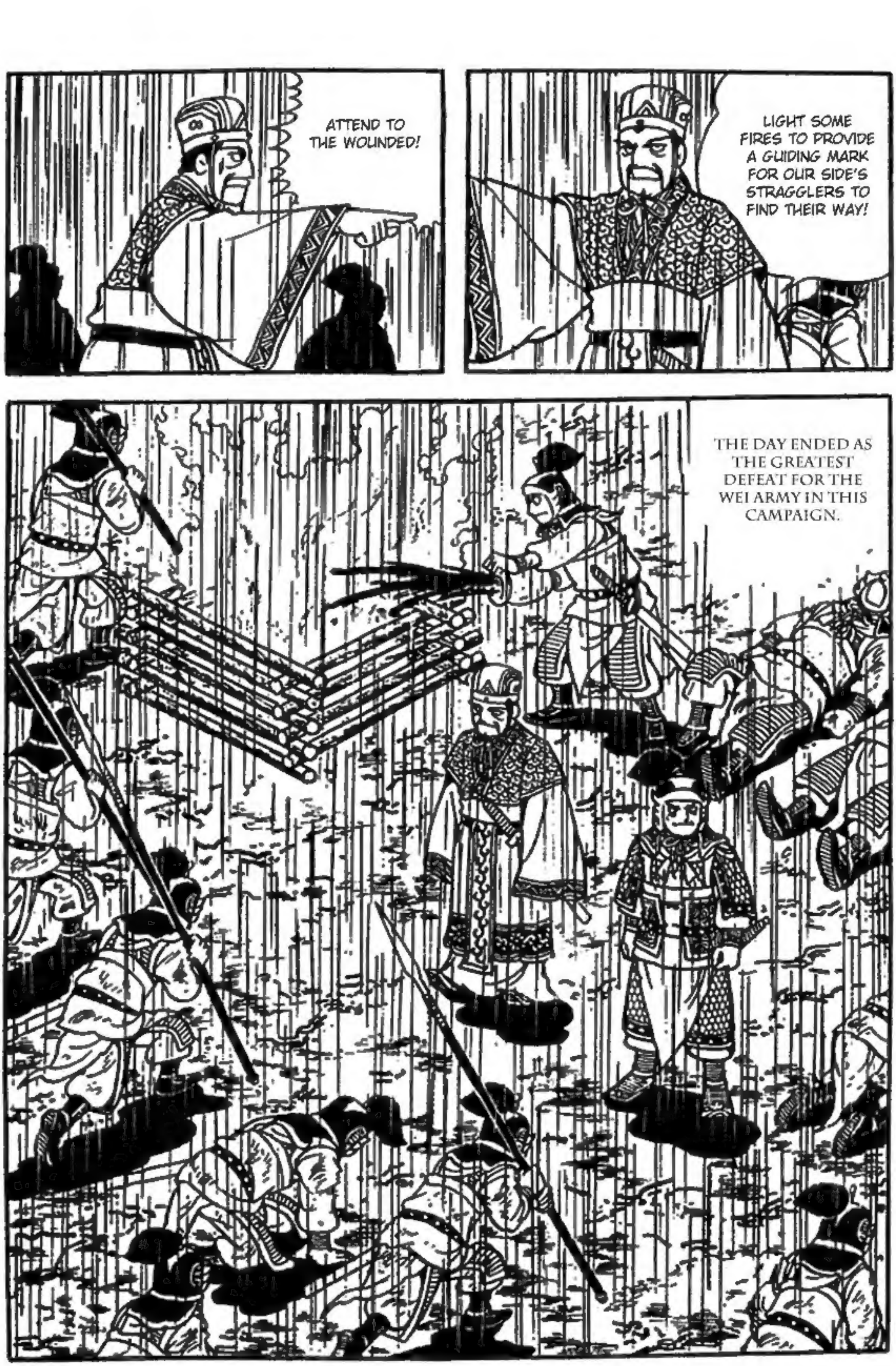
I SHOULD HAVE EXPECTED AS MUCH...


THE LAST COMPANY TO CROSS WILL BURN DOWN OR DESTROY THESE PONTOON BRIDGES TO PREVENT THE ENEMIES FROM CROSSING THE RIVER!



ATTEND TO THE WOUNDED!

LIGHT SOME FIRES TO PROVIDE A GUIDING MARK FOR OUR SIDE'S STRAGGLERS TO FIND THEIR WAY!


THE DAY ENDED AS THE GREATEST DEFEAT FOR THE WEI ARMY IN THIS CAMPAIGN.

SO HE GOT AWAY, DID HE...
YES, A FREAK RAINSTORM SAVED HIM IN THE NICK OF TIME.
SIMA YI ESCAPED ALIVE!?

TRANSLATED BY HOX

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横山 光輝

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